SC relieves Garchitorena as Sandigan head

STORY BELOW, COLUMN 1

Carlson suicide sparks domestic violence bill

BY GERALD G. LACUARTA

THE SUICIDE of former beauty queen-actress Maria Teresa Carlson is stirring a clamor for the enactment of laws against domestic violence and abuse of women in intimate relations.

"The death of Carlson is a call once more for government, especially Congress, to make measures that will address violence against women," said the National Commission on the Role of

CARLSON/ A4

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2001 ★ 56 PAGES 4 SECTIONS VOL.16 NO. 354 ₱15

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Moro rebels give up but keep firearms

MNLF group frees 89 Zamboanga City hostages

BY JULIE S. ALIPALA, ROLLY A. SAN JUAN AND DONA Z. PAZZIBUGAN

ZAMBOANGA CITY—All the hostages seized Tuesday by the Moro National Liberation Front are now free, but the rebels got away with their firearms.

"*Tapos na* (It's over)," a smiling President Macapagal-Arroyo told reporters in Malacañang around 1:30 p.m. yesterday. "I'm very grateful to the crisis committee . . . and the negotiators. So it's done. They've already moved out (of Zamboanga City)."

At exactly 1:20 p.m., the remaining 89 hostages were "abandoned" by their MNLF captors in Barangay Pasonanca here. Earlier, at 12:20 a.m., 21 hostages were freed.

At 12:25 p.m., 217 rebels under the leadership of Julhambrie Misuari—nephew of Nur Misuari—vacated the house of the Solis family on Rinnet Drive in Pasonanca.

Leaving their hostages behind, the rebels boarded six military trucks and a dump truck and went on their way escorted by a battalion of policemen and another from the Army.

Julhambrie Misuari said his group would not make trouble anymore, and thanked the civil and military authorities responsible for defusing the tension.

He said he and his men were just doing their duty of watching over the 96-hectare Cabatangan complex owned by the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

The rebels said they were headed to a recognized MNLF camp in Panubigan, Zamboanga del Sur. But the INQUIRER learned that there is no town of that name in the province.

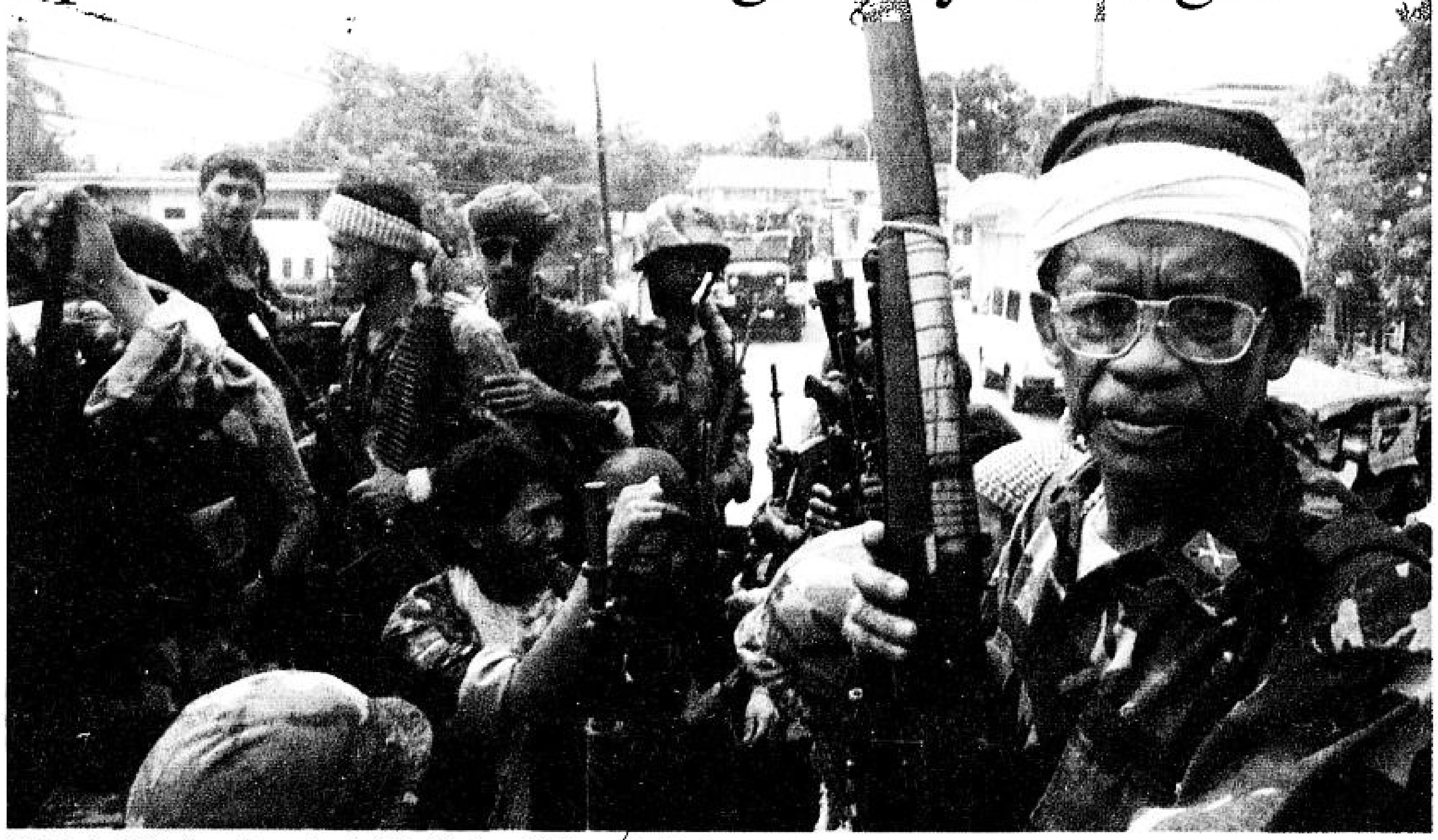
Around 3 p.m., the rebels alighted from the trucks in Barangay Bulong in Zamboanga City, according to Supt. Arnulfo Perez, police chief of Zamboanga Sibugay.

Bulong is a coastal village near the Eleven Islands.

The freed hostages were taken to the Edwin Andrews Air Base in Barangay Santa Maria.

Mayor Maria Clara Lobregat described the negotiation and the turnover of the hostages as "very peaceful."

MORO/ A18



ONLY in the Philippines: Surrendered rebels bristling with firearms in Zamboanga City are being escorted by a battalion of policemen and transported in military trucks to a place of their choice.

BULLIT MARQUEZ/AP

THE TROUBLES they have seen are etched on the faces of released hostages.

CHARLIE SACEDA/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

Peace, Kiara's birthday wish

BY J. ALIPALA
PDI Mindanao Bureau

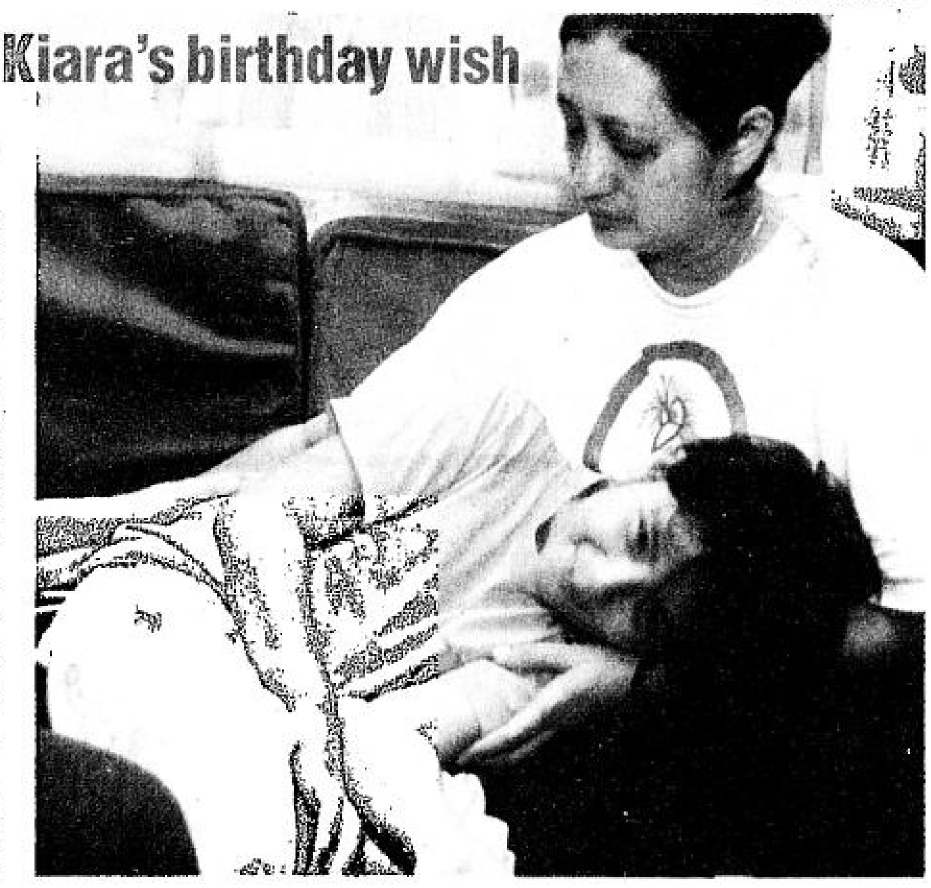
ZAMBOANGA CITY—Ex-hostage Kiara Españo turned 8 years old yesterday (at right with her mother, Melissa).

And she celebrated her birthday at the VIP Lounge of the Edwin Andrews Air Base here after she and 20 other hostages were freed at 12:15 a.m.

"This is the happiest day for me because we were allowed to go home. I just feel sad because my dad is still there," Kiara told the INQUIRER.

She was referring to her father Emir Españo, dean

PEACE/ A18



SC relieves Garchitorena as Sandigan head

BY MICHAEL LIM UBAC AND JULIET JAVELLANA

UNTIL yesterday afternoon, he had been unaware of both the complaint against him and the Supreme Court resolution relieving him of his duties as the top justice of the anti-graft court, Francis Garchitorena told reporters.

In a 43-page, full-court resolution, the Supreme Court indefinitely relieved Garchitorena as presiding justice of the Sandiganbayan and the chair of its first division.

He was fired for allegedly sitting on more than 300 cases, including cases filed 10 years ago.

The high court said Garchitorena'a relief starts on Dec. 1 "until further orders from the court."

Aside from the relief, the court imposed a P20,000 fine on Garchitorena for inefficiency and gross neglect of duty.

"I am really overwhelmed by your (media) presence here but I have not been informed of any reason why you should be here (asking me)," he said at around 3 p.m. He received a faxed copy of the resolution an hour later.

Garchitorena told reporters he was unaware of any order of the high tribunal or of the complaint filed by the Integrated Bar of the Philippines in July 2000.

He calmly accepted the high court's order.

"Well, it's not a topic for great rejoicing but let me just say that all of this was not a product of sloth," Garchitorena said in his defense.

He said he would file a motion for clarification on certain matters that were not clearly presented to the high court like being made to account for cases which did not fall

SC/ A18

OIC: Neither here nor there on Misuari case

BY FE ZAMORA
INQ7,
DONA PAZZIBUGAN AND NORMAN BORDADORA

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo and Nur Misuari are both correct in professing their positions regarding the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), according to a Malacañang source privy to the peace process.

"It is a nebulous situation," the official told INQ7.net.

He said Misuari, former chief of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), "is correct in claiming he is still recognized by the OIC because there is nothing that says to the contrary."

On the other hand, the government is also correct in saying the OIC does not recognize Misuari, who was arrested Saturday in Sabah as he fled fighting between his supporters and Philippine troops, "because that is what the ambassador (of OIC member countries) are saying."

"The government is in limbo," the Malacañang official said.

However, he said the "nature" of the OIC must also be considered. "The OIC does not move like the UN," he said.

The OIC, composed of foreign ministers of all Islamic countries, brokered the peace agreement entered into between the Philippine government and the MNLF in 1996.

Within the OIC are several committees, including the Committee

OIC/ A18

Atong holds key to Erap's crimes, says Indian trader

BY ARMAND N. NOCUM

THE PHILIPPINE government must safeguard the life of Charlie "Atong" Ang because he is the "key" to Joseph Estrada's supposed links to kidnapping and other heinous crimes, according to an alleged close associate of the ousted President.

"I hope (Ang) will not be killed. He knows too much about the kidnappings done with the blessings of Erap, (Sen. Panfilo) Lacson and (Estrada son) Jinggoy," Indian national Danny Devnani told the INQUIRER yesterday in a phone interview.

"Ang is the key to finishing off Erap, Lacson, Jinggoy and the (crime syndicate) Kuratong Baleleng," he added.

Devnani, supposedly a member of Estrada's inner circle, urged the government to immediately advise the US Federal Bureau of Investigation of the danger posed to Ang's life by the vital information that he was holding.

FBI agents arrested Ang Sunday at the Paris Hotel Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada. He is now in the custody of the US Marshal Service and is being held at a deten-

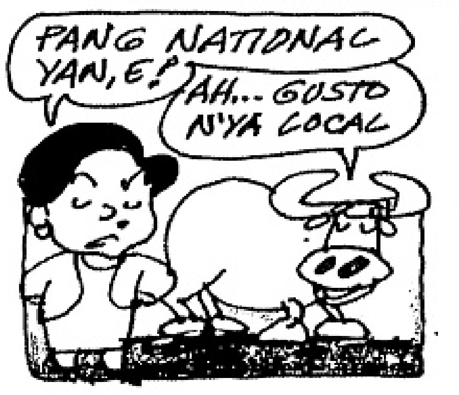
ATONG/ A17

GMA lectures mayors on action agenda

THE MUNICIPAL mayors must still be in shock.

They may have expected to be courted by their "guest of honor," President Macapagal-Arroyo. Instead, she repeatedly chided mayors belonging to the League of Municipalities of the Philippines (LMP) during their general

GMA/ A18



Marcelo charge worries GMA

BY CARLITO PABLO

PACIFICO "Pic" Marcelo III has been discredited by his business associates but he is giving Malacañang the jitters.

Presidential spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao yesterday admitted that President Macapagal-Arroyo was worried that Marcelo's accusation that she attempted to take over his telecommunications company for private gain could destabilize her administration.

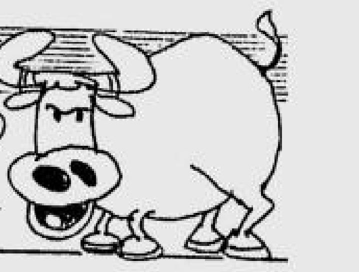
"The country is starting to turn around. Her trip to the United States was the clincher. Confidence is being restored. Then we have this opposition plot to destabilize things and make people worry again," Tiglao said.

"That's her worry," he said. "We could have had a very happy Christmas but then we have these noises from unscrupulous opposition quarters."

Tiglao accused Marcelo of allowing himself to be used as an "attack dog" by the opposition for its "main project" of undermining the government.

The presidential spokesperson noted that Marcelo's sworn statement containing his allegations against Ms Macapagal was drafted by the Accra law office of opposition stalwart Sen. Edgardo Angara.

MARCELO/ A4


MATINDING BABALA!

US rules out deal for hostage couple

THE US State Department has ruled out any deal or ransom payment but demanded that the Abu Sayyaf release the American missionary couple, Martin and Gracia Burnham, following their televised appeal for freedom.

The firm restatement of Washington's consistent position came after the Burnhams pleaded for foreign intervention to end their six-month ordeal.

"I think we have made clear we don't make concessions to terrorists," State Department spokesperson Richard Boucher said in a statement.

"We don't make concessions to terrorists. We don't pay ransom. We consider the plea made by hostages to have been made under duress," Bucher said.

He said Washington's position that the Abu Sayyaf kidnap group should release the hostages unconditionally and safely remained.

He said the US government is coordinating closely with the Philippine government on the rescue of the US hostages.

Some hostages freed earlier have been quoted as saying that the Burnhams were severely emaciated but relatively calm.

The Burnhams complained in a television interview last Thursday that the government's efforts to win their release from the Abu Sayyaf had failed.

"We know that the Philippine government is doing everything to rescue us," Martin Burnham said in an interview with Net-25.

"I don't want to sound disrespectful, but it's not working," he said in the interview conducted in a forested area in Basilan and watched by the Abu Sayyaf abductors.

"Anyone who can solve this crisis, we would appreciate very much," his tearful wife said. *AFP with a report from Norman Bordadora*

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John O, Barbers threaten to defect

By Rocky Nazareno and Clarissa S. Batino

A POWER shift looms in the Senate after administration Senators John Osmeña and Robert Barbers threatened to bolt the majority if the government continues to do nothing about certain erring customs officials.

Osmeña, chair of the Senate finance committee, said he is going to resign his post, bolt the majority and work for a revamp of the Senate leadership should his call for the sacking of Cebu customs officer-in-charge Sebastian Maravillas go unheeded.

A similarly peeved Barbers complained about a "lady customs official" who "has been facilitating the smuggling of imported goods, costing the government billions of pesos in lost revenues."

"I will join Osmeña (in leaving the majority) if this official is not removed," Barbers said, promising to reveal the official's name today.

The twin threats could lead to a power shift in the Senate where the administration bloc holds a slim 13-11 majority.

Osmeña's ire was raised during yesterday's committee hearing into the Department of Finance's budget, after his inquiries about Maravillas were only met with "smiles" from Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho.

"*Tatawa-tawa*, *pa*-cute cute (He was laughing and being cute)," said Osmeña.

"*Ibalik mo ang isang bilyon na ninakaw ng kapatid mo* (Return the one billion your sibling stole)," Osmeña told Camacho, in a fit of rage, as he adjourned the committee hearing.

Camacho was rendered speechless, shocked by the senator's outburst, before he was able to reply.

The finance secretary said he understood that Osmeña was really upset about issues at the Bureau of Customs and that he (Camacho) simply became a "shock absorber."

He said Osmeña may have been misled on the issue about his sister, Marissa Camacho-Reyes, who heads Code NGO, a non governmental group that focuses on livelihood projects.

Camacho explained that Code NGO had proposed a government bond issue through the Rizal Commercial Banking Corp., the earnings of which would be used to finance the group's livelihood projects.

The bond issue, said Camacho, had been proposed to his predecessor at the DOF, Alberto Romulo.

Camacho said that when he was appointed finance secretary in June, he had asked to be inhibited from all transactions involving his sister.

"The bond was auctioned to 10 bidders and it just so happened that RCBC bought aggressively. Any arrangement between RCBC and Code NGO was beyond the DOF," Camacho said.

Sources said most of the P10-billion in peace bonds were awarded to RCBC and the bonds were later sold at a discount that earned P1.38 billion for Code NGO.

Osmeña said he had long been questioning the appointment of Maravillas because of reports the customs official was involved in the smuggling of 200,000 sacks of rice from Vietnam worth P200 million.

Osmeña said Camacho told him Maravillas enjoyed the backing of Cebu's congressmen.

But when he met with the congressmen, Osmeña said, "six out of eight of them said they did not support him."

Osmeña said he then wrote a letter to Camacho in which he and the six congressmen asked the secretary to sack Maravillas.

Instead of getting a reply, Osmeña said all he got was a smile from Camacho.

This made Osmeña go ballistic as he announced that he was giving Camacho up to this afternoon to remove Maravillas.

"If you do not want to remove that collector, on Monday I will resign from the finance committee, I will leave the majority, I will join the opposition and I will move for a reorganization in the Senate," Osmeña said.

He explained he would give up the finance committee leadership because "I do not want to have (anything to do with) the budget of this government if the finance secretary will not support something that will stop smuggling."

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Missing witness not with us, PNP insists

By TJ Burgonio
Agnes E. Donato
and Philip Tubeza

POLICE officials insisted yesterday they were not holding the man who might hold the key to Philip Medel Jr.'s guilt—or lack of it—in the Nida Blanca murder case.

This after the family of Mike Martinez petitioned the Quezon City Regional Trial Court to order the Philippine National Police to produce Martinez.

Chief Supt. Crescencio Maralit, PNP spokesperson, denied the missing man was in police hands.

"How can we produce a person who is not in our custody?" Maralit told reporters.

Director Thompson Lation, PNP directorate for police community relations chief, dismissed Medel's claim that Task Force Marsha had a hand in the abduction of Martinez.

"That's a fabrication. Why do they (Martinez's family) keep believing Medel?" he asked.

Martinez's wife, Ma. Estrellita, and his mother, Teresita, filed a petition for habeas corpus with the QC court naming as respondents PNP chief Director General Leandro Mendoza, Chief Supt. Nestorio Gualberto, Senior Supt. Leonardo Espina and Jesus Versoza.

Gualberto heads the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group and Task Force Marsha, which has Espina and Versoza as members.

The family reported that Martinez was abducted by eight persons at the Sun Valley Subdivision in Parañaque on the morning of Nov. 19. They said they suspect he was snatched by police.

Officials of Task Force Marsha, however, doubted the family's report, saying Martinez could have faked his abduction to avoid being investigated in the Nida Blanca case.

Medel, who had earlier confessed to killing Blanca at the instigation of her husband, Rod Lauren Strunk, said it was Martinez who introduced him to Strunk. Medel later recanted his confession.

Medel said Martinez was brought before him by task force spokesperson Espina while he was in CIDG custody on the night of Nov. 19.

Espina, Medel claimed, even punched Martinez in the stomach.

The National Bureau of Investigation, meanwhile, is set to get the statement of Katherine Jones Torres, Blanca's only child, about the dynamics in her family.

"Her statements would give us an insight into the relationships within the Blanca household, as well as the status of the properties," Wycoco said.

He said Torres had expressed her willingness to cooperate fully with the NBI investigation.

The NBI is providing security for Torres at the Blanca White Plains home in Quezon City.

Torres also provided "new documents" to the NBI and reportedly gave a "preliminary" interview to investigators.

Wycoco said that once the investigation warrants hearing Strunk's side, the NBI would also invite him for questioning.

"Once we gather statements, we may invite him for questioning," Wycoco said, adding that he has assigned 13 more agents to the investigation.

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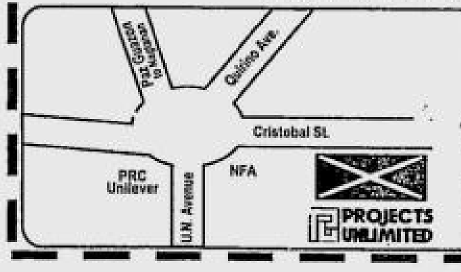

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NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Notice is hereby given that a decision in **DARAB Case No. 6658** (Reg. Case No. VI-10-AKL-95) entitled **AURORA VILLALUNA CUEVAS and LINDA VILLALUNA VILLARANTE versus EFITANIA ILI** was promulgated by the DAR Adjudication Board, Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City on February 5, 2001.

Counsels and parties to this case particularly **Atty. Rosalinda Tormon** whose last known address was in **Sut Yat Sen Bldg., Mapa St., Iloilo City** are hereby advised to get a copy of the said decision from the DARAB Secretariat, DAR Adjudication Board, Diliman, Quezon City. After the lapse of thirty (30) days from the date of the posting of this notice, without any motion for reconsideration or appeal being filed, an Entry of Judgment shall be made and the decision to this case shall become final and executory.

November 20, 2001. Diliman, Quezon City.

Acting Executive Director
DARAB Secretariat

Inquirer-Nov. 22 & 29, 2001

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COCO LEVY DEAL

Palace says it's keeping lines with Danding open

By Carlito Pablo

MALACAÑANG is keeping open the lines of communications with controversial businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco but denied there are secret talks to settle the dispute over the coconut levy funds out of court.

"We cannot close (the lines)... but there are no negotiations," presidential spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao said yesterday.

For her part, President Macapagal-Arroyo has taken personal offense at the persistent accusations of corruption from Linda Olaguer-Montayre, the secretary general of the People's Consultative Assembly.

"Why don't you find out about Linda Montayre and the estafa cases against her?" Ms Macapagal said to reporters.

She described as "fantastic" Montayre's latest claim that First Gentleman Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo, her brother Diosdado Macapagal Jr. and Norberto Gonzales, the presidential adviser on special concerns, were conducting "backdoor" talks with Cojuangco.

"Don't you think her charges are getting more fantastic?" Ms Macapagal said.

As to the alleged participation of her brother, the President said: "I hardly even see him."

Tiglao said the dispute over the ownership of the funds has not been made easier by a Supreme Court opinion that the funds were "imbued with public interest" but which fell short of declaring them as public funds.

He said petitions had been made to the high court to clarify this opinion but the tribunal has yet to hand down a ruling.

Malacañang was therefore supporting a move to have Congress pass a law declaring the funds public, he said.

The measure could run into legal questions, however, as the issue is pending not only before the Supreme Court but also before the Sandiganbayan.

Tiglao said Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo and Haydee Yorac, chair of the Presidential Commission on Good Government, were heading administration efforts concerning the levy dispute.

"Yorac is a very upright person and you can ask her: there are no secret negotiations with Danding," Tiglao said. *With reports from Gerald G. Lacuarta and Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

PAL says it's paying dues at Naia 2

CONTRARY to the claim of the Department of Transportation and Communication, Philippine Airlines is not using the Terminal 3 of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport for free. And neither is it using the terminal exclusively.

This was the statement released by PAL yesterday in reaction to the pronouncement of the DOTC, which accused the airline and its owner Lucio Tan, of masterminding a smear campaign against Transportation Secretary Pantaleon Alvarez.

PAL said it had been paying P10.5 million a month as rental and utility charges for its use of the facility transferring its operations there in August 1999 and is current in its dues.

The flag carrier said that it does not have exclusive right to Terminal 2, which has been open for the use of other carriers right from the start.

PAL said airport authorities had announced as early as eight months ago that at least two foreign airlines would shift operations there from Terminal 1. None has done so to this day.

The airline said it had nothing to do with Alvarez's current legal and confirmation problems. Both the airline and its chair are not party to the P76 million plunder suit being heard by the Ombudsman against the secretary.

The MIA-NAIA Association of Service Operations (Maso) headed by its spokesperson, Perfecto Yasay, had filed the plunder case, accusing Alvarez of graft for holding interests in Wintrack Builders, one of the sub-contractors involved in the building of Terminal 3 of Naia.

Maso is also spearheading the campaign to stop the confirmation of Alvarez at the Commission on Appointments.

Yesterday, opponents of Alvarez held a picket in front of the Senate to pressure the Commission on Appointments into rejecting the appointment of Alvarez. The protesters, who claimed to represent 11 groups, including the Move Clark Now and the Pinoy Gumising Ka Movement, accused Alvarez of "placing personal gains over the country's interests" in the controversial contract between the government and Piatco, the builder and operator of Naia 3. They are also seeking the nullification of the contract.

Alvarez had denied the allegations of conflict of interest, saying he had divested himself of his interest in Wintrack when he became a congressman in the last Congress.

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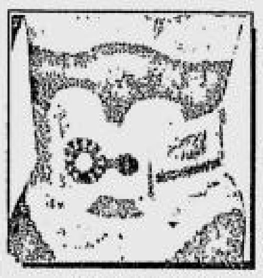

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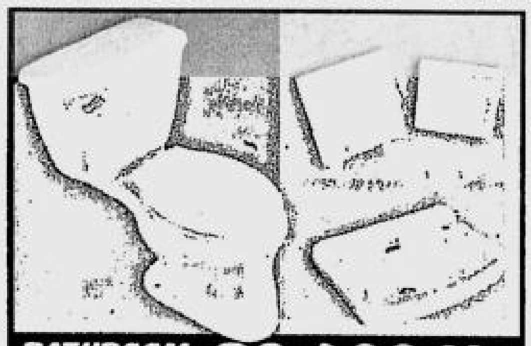

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Drilon to Marcelo: 'Ano ka, barko?'

By Cynthia D. Balana and Blanche Rivera

"YOU cannot be a citizen by convenience. *Ano ka barko* (Are you a ship?)" quipped Senate President Franklin Drilon when informed that businessman Pacifico Marcelo had said he uses his US passport just for convenience.

Marcelo's US passport has added to the woes of the man who accuses President Macapagal-Arroyo of demanding control of one of his telecom companies in exchange for the recall of a presidential veto.

Marcelo has admitted to reporters to having been naturalized as an American citizen when he was still living in the US.

But he insisted that he had renounced his American citizenship and reacquired his Philippine citizenship through court proceedings.

But Drilon said during a press conference yesterday that Marcelo could be guilty of dual citizenship.

Drilon said Marcelo must prove to the Bureau of Immigration and Deportation (BID) that he is indeed a Filipino citizen.

On Monday, Immigration agents went to the Senate to "invite" Marcelo for questioning. Marcelo had gone to the Senate to submit his 12-page affidavit of allegations against Ms Macapagal. The BI agents said Marcelo had been traveling in and out of the country using his American passport. Records at the bureau also showed Marcelo was still an American citizen.

The BID said yesterday it will "continue to go after" Marcelo. As a businessman, Marcelo does not have an investors visa, according to the BID.

Immigration Deputy Commissioner Orlando Dizon said the BID has secured documents proving that Marcelo is an American citizen.

Dizon added that if he has renounced his US citizenship, Marcelo would have been issued a Filipino identification card and his name erased from the BID list of registered foreigners in the country.

Marcelo said that despite his having reacquired his Philippine citizenship, he was still using his American passport since it has never been canceled by the US government.

He said the government has not informed the US of the change in his citizenship status and that he was traveling as a businessman using a US passport for "convenience."

But Drilon stressed that it is not the obligation of the state to inform the US government of a change in citizenship status.

Marcelo charge worries GMA

(From page A1)

Asked for comment, Marcelo said Malacañang was bent on covering up what he described as "a blatant attempt to grab a private enterprise."

Marcelo was referring to the Philippine Communications Clearinghouse Inc. (PCCI) which he claimed Ms Macapagal had wanted to take control of, a charge strongly denied by Malacañang.

"If I'm lying, then how come the Palace is panicking," Marcelo said on the phone.

But three of his partners in PCCI denied that Ms Macapagal had tried to take over PCCI. In separate sworn statements, Guillermo Yanza, Voltaire Alcantara and Dante

Madriaga also denied a P40-million bribe allegedly offered to First Gentleman Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo.

Ambush

"I only wanted to be heard but what did they do? They set me up for an ambush," Marcelo said, referring to the attempt of immigration agents to arrest him when he submitted his sworn statement to the Senate on Nov. 26.

The opposition senators' intervention foiled the arrest of Marcelo whom the Bureau of Immigration and Deportation (BID) described as an American citizen who may have violated the Anti-Dummy Law for owning a telecommunications firm.

Even as it denied Malacañang's hand in the inquiry into Marcelo's citizenship, the BID has been coordinating with the Board of Investments and the Office of the Solicitor General in gathering evidence against the President's accuser.

The BID said it could deport Marcelo because it had a "strong case" against him, primarily misrepresentation and violation of the country's immigration law.

Orlando Dizon, deputy immigration commissioner, said Marcelo, who refused to go with immigration agents twice last Monday for questioning on his citizenship, could not easily renounce his American citizenship.

Marcelo denied Tiglao's claim that Accra drafted his affidavit. "My lawyer is Vic de la Serna and he is not connected with Accra,' the businessman said.

While Marcelo has yet to be formally summoned to testify before the Senate blue ribbon committee, which is investigating the telecommunications scandal, Ms Macapagal's private publicist, Dante Ang, lashed out at him.

Reimbursement

Ang claimed that Marcelo had called him up and demanded P40 million for his silence.

"Marcelo said he needed P40 million to recoup his business losses in setting up his companies," Ang said, referring to PCCI and APC Wireless Interface Network, which were granted congressional franchises. Ms Macapagal later vetoed the franchises.

"But I told him that that would not be possible. 'Why will the government or anyone for that matter pay him for his expenses?'" Ang said in a phone interview.

Ang said he received Marcelo's call either Friday or Saturday while he was in still in the United States.

Ang was supposed to call Marcelo last Sunday, the eve of Marcelo's submission of his sworn statement to the Senate, upon his arrival in Manila but Marcelo's mobile phone was supposedly switched off.

Marcelo vehemently denied Ang's claim that he demanded P40 million.

"That's crazy!" Marcelo said, noting that Ang wanted to "settle matters" so that he could remain silent about his charges against the President.

Marcelo said he simply asked Ang why his contracts with the private sector and government were canceled when he refused to surrender his company to the President.

Marcelo also said that Ang had wanted him to postpone the submission of his sworn statement last Monday by one day for some unexplained reasons.

"Ang said it would be preferable if I submit my affidavit on Tuesday but he didn't say why," Marcelo said.

The businessman admitted that he called Ang but only because an associate of Ang had pleaded with him to call the President's publicist.

No crime

Tiglao said that while Ms Macapagal was worried about the consequences of Marcelo's allegations, she was confident that his charges would not prosper.

"We believe in our hearts of hearts that we did not commit a crime. This is an opposition plot," Tiglao said.

Tiglao said Marcelo's affidavit was not going to develop into a full-blown controversy unlike the charges leveled against then President Joseph Estrada that resulted into his impeachment and ouster from office.

Tiglao also dismissed reports of an impeachment case against Ms Macapagal.

"There is no basis for an impeachment case. They cannot engineer an impeachment without any real basis," he said.

Tiglao said Marcelo was also being used by Jaime Dichaves, an Estrada associate who had fled the country, to discredit the government.

Dichaves, for whom Marcelo had worked as a consultant, is facing plunder charges along with Estrada.

"The information we received is that while Marcelo has his own personal agenda, his agenda has been taken over by Dichaves, his close business associate," Tiglao said.

It was Dichaves who tried to claim ownership of the infamous Jose Velarde bank accounts during Estrada's impeachment trial.

Marcelo had admitted having been a consultant of Dichaves but he asserted that Dichaves had no interests in PCCI and APC Wireless.

Protection

In the Senate, Senate President Franklin Drilon said the chamber was not a "protection agency" that can be used by accused persons to shield them from the long arm of the law.

Drilon scored opposition senators for coming to the rescue of Marcelo who was to be arrested Monday by immigration agents for falsification of public documents.

Marcelo was being served an order of arrest issued by Immigration Commissioner Andrea Domingo while he was holding a press conference at the Senate media office.

"Some of my colleagues in the opposition have questioned my order not to place Mr. Marcelo in the custody of the Senate," Drilon said in a press conference.

"I maintain that my position is not only proper, it is also backed by pertinent laws and our own internal rules," he said.

Drilon explained that a person could be taken into custody of the Senate if a witness in a committee hearing was declared in contempt or if he or she was placed under the Witness Protection Program.

"In the case of Mr. Marcelo, his affidavit is still being evaluated by the Blue Ribbon Committee and he has not yet appeared before the committee nor placed under the WPP," Drilon said.

He said that had he allowed Marcelo to be taken into Senate custody, "what would prevent anyone from coming to our succor and seek out protection?"

"Where do we draw the line?" he said.

Drilon underscored that "there is a presumption of regularity and validity in the issuance of the BID order and its execution by its agents."

"Mr. Marcelo cannot use the Senate to evade the service of orders and other processes of a government agency, in this case the BID, which are presumed valid unless declared otherwise by a court of law," he said.

But the Senate President said that the immigration agents "should have exercised more prudence and respected the premises of the Senate."

"The overzealous BID personnel created an unnecessary media event that distracted us from more substantive matters," he said.

Dizon led a team of agents in serving the order on Marcelo at the Senate.

But their efforts were frustrated when five opposition senators, led by Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr., came to Marcelo's aid and told Dizon that he could be charged with "obstruction of a Senate investigation" should he proceed to take Marcelo into his custody.

In the House of Representatives, opposition Rep. Didagen Dilangalen yesterday called for an inquiry into the telecom scandal.

Dilangalen delivered a privilege speech but due to lack of quorum the House adjourned its session and failed to act on his request for a House inquiry. *With reports from Blanche Rivera, Rocky Nazareno and Christine Avendaño*

UPDATE'S
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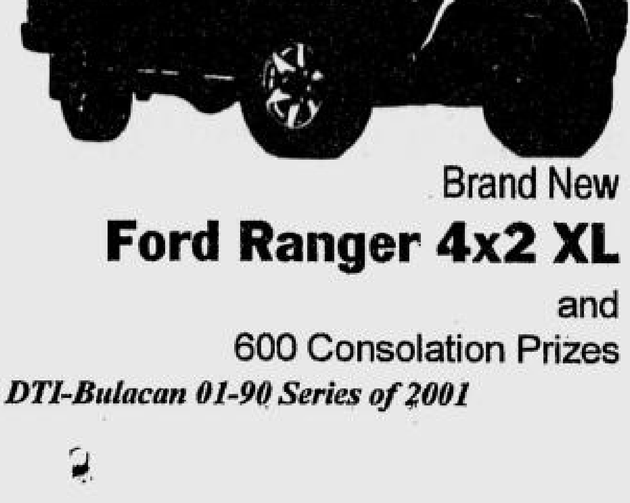

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Carlson suicide sparks . . .

(From p[age A1)

Filipino Women (NCRFW). *(See related story on page A24)*

The NCRFW cited statistics from the Philippine National Police that showed a total 6,697 gender-based violence and 5,790 child abuse cases from January to July 2001 alone. Of the reported crimes against women, 58 percent, or 3,878, were physical injuries, including wife battering. The figure was higher than last year's, NCRFW said.

The group said 70 percent of the women and children victims experienced sexual and physical abuse in their own homes.

"Despite the high and rising incidence of domestic violence, we do not have any law that explicitly punishes it," said Aurora Javate-de Dios, NCRFW chair.

Under the Revised Penal Code, domestic violence falls within the broad category of physical injuries, De Dios noted.

The NCRFW is the policy-making body that advises the President and the Cabinet on women and gender concerns.

De Dios said the NCRFW "could not help but link Carlson's suicide to allegations of wife battery and abuse" because she had previously reported abuse by her husband, former Ilocos Norte Gov. Rodolfo Fariñas. Carlson had even sought refuge with Kalakasan, an organization assisting survivors of violence against women, only to go back to Fariñas' arms.

"No one likes to be hurt," De Dios said of domestic violence. "Battered women do not leave abusive spouses or partners for fear for the lives and safety of the children, emotional or economic dependence, and religious or family reasons."

And in extreme conditions, "a woman resorts to suicide if she cannot leave the horrid situation of violence inside her home," De Dios said.

Several bills

There are several bills penalizing domestic violence and establishing crisis centers that are pending before the Senate and the House.

One of these is Senate Bill 594, or the Domestic Violence Act, filed by Senate Majority Leader Loren Legarda-Leviste. The bill is still with the Senate committees on youth, women and family relations, and justice and human rights.

"The headlines of the broad sheets during the past few weeks are unmasking the recurrent instances of violence that are committed by family members within the premises of our homes," Legarda said in a press statement.

Under her proposed measure, battery, assault, coercion, sexual assault and harassment shall be categorized as domestic violence.

According to the NCRFW, wife-battering starts when tension between husband and wife or within the family breaks out. The husband inflicts physical, verbal, sexual, emotional or economic violence on the wife, then seeks forgiveness and woos her until tension builds up again and the cycle continues.

NCRFW's De Dios appealed to the PNP and the National Bureau of Investigation to determine what caused Carlson's suicide and not simply dismiss the case as such.

"We . . . must know the circumstances that made her take her life and leave her family, especially her children," De Dios said.

Bayan Muna Rep. Liza Maza, chair of the women's group Gabriela, agreed with the NCRFW's call.

"There is a need to trace the experiences of violence which Carlson claimed was perpetrated by Fariñas to understand the causes which drove her to her tragic end," Maza said. *With a report from Rocky Nazareno*

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News that makes a difference

Comelec won't halt ARMM count

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE COMMISSION on Elections yesterday rejected the advice of the National Movement for Free Elections to stop the post-election count in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao because of massive fraud even as it reported progress in the canvassing of returns from the region's five provinces and one city.

Comelec chair Alfredo Benipayo said he saw no reason to stop the counting as the alleged anomalies were already being investigated and were not likely to affect the poll results.

The Comelec has, however, declared a failure of elections in Datu Odin Sinsuat town in Maguindanao where the board of election inspectors had discovered that the ballots had already been filled before the polls even started.

The town covers 12 precincts and around 2,400 voters.

This could affect the election results only in a very tight race, Benipayo said.

The Comelec chair said he would wait for the results of the canvassing in Maguindanao and in the Comelec head office in Manila before deciding whether to hold elections in Datu Odin Sinsuat.

"The election there was finished before it actually started, so obviously we will not count in that area, but there were no reports of untoward incidents in the other places," Benipayo said.

The Namfrel itself has continued with its quick count of last Monday's election exercise.

In the Namfrel report as of 2 p.m. yesterday, administration candidates Parouk Hussin and Mahid Mutilan appeared headed for a landslide victory in the gubernatorial and vice gubernatorial races, respectively.

Hussin with his 137,654 votes was way ahead of his closest rival, Ebrahim Paglas III who had 54,893. Mutilan enjoyed 137,165 votes while his opponent, Benjamin Loong only had 50,533.

Benipayo said the trend by province appear to favor the administration candidates although the Comelec's head office has yet to receive the certificates of canvass that should have arrived yesterday.

According to Namfrel's 3 p.m. report yesterday, the provincial board of canvassers had canvassed only 12 of 38 election returns in Lanao del Sur, including Marawi City; five of 22 in Maguindanao and only four of 10 in Tawi-Tawi.

Regional election officials said only three of 18 returns have been canvassed in Sulu—where renegade Moro National Liberation Front members staged an attack last week to stop the polls—and two of six in Basilan.

The winners for the provincial seats will be proclaimed in Mindanao, but winners of the regional posts will be declared in Manila.

Erap to see eye doctor

THE SANDIGANBAYAN yesterday gave detained former President Joseph Estrada leave to consult an eye doctor today.

Estrada, who has told the court he might require eye surgery, can undergo a comprehensive eye examination at a Manila clinic and stay there "on the same day for as long as it takes to accomplish said procedures," Sandiganbayan Justice Anacleto Badoy ruled.

Should the examination yield findings that would call for surgery, Estrada, who is on trial for corruption, could then "file the corresponding motion" with the court, the ruling read.

The court said state prosecutors did not object to a medical furlough. Police would escort Estrada to the clinic this afternoon.

The 64-year-old former president sought medical leave from detention last week for the eye examination, which he said may take four hours.

The one-time movie star "had complained of blurred vision, glare, difficulty with reading and eye irritation particularly of the left eye" since 1998, his lawyer Serafin Cuevas said.

His ophthalmologist has found a cataract as well as a cyst on Estrada's left eye, and "since then, he complained of further weakening of vision."

Estrada has been detained at the Veteran Hospital in Quezon City since May.

The anti-graft court has yet to rule on a separate plea for medical leave so he could fly to the United States for knee surgery. *AFP*

Benipayo exasperated

BENIPAYO

EXASPERATED by the unending conflicts in the agency he heads, Comelec chair Alfredo Benipayo yesterday said he would wish the poll body's top leadership could be subject to legal suits just like other government officials. Benipayo, who has been at odds with a group of Comelec commissioners led by Luz Tancangco, said misbehaving Comelec officials could be easily handled if they did not have to be impeached first.

A former administrator of the Supreme Court, Benipayo lamented that he could not do anything about the four commissioners who attempted to postpone the elections in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (***See related story, Page A15***).

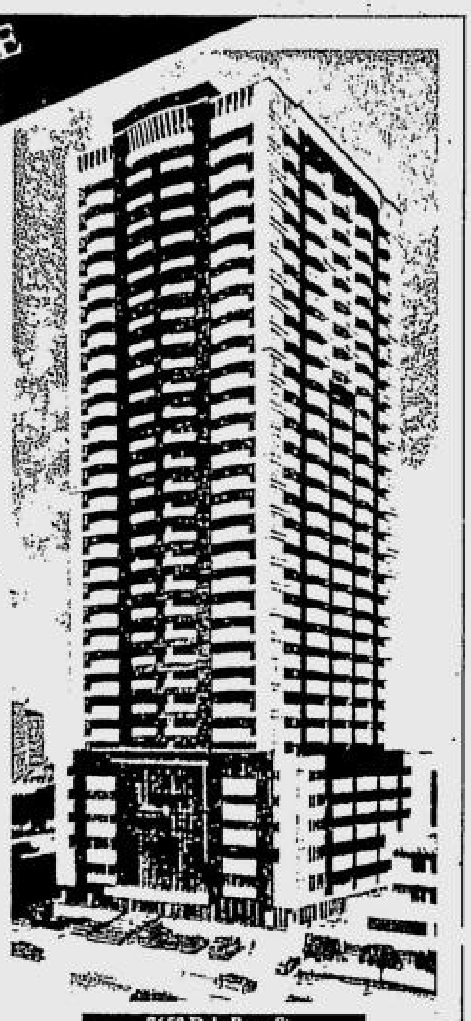
Under Comelec rules, he had no power to censure or sanction Tancangco, Ralph Lantion, Rufino Javier and Mehol Sadain.

"That's the anomaly here. If I move to censure her (Tancangco), that will require voting, and they are the majority (in the en banc). How can three (commissioners) sanction four?" Benipayo said.

But the Comelec will not stop the National Movement for Free Elections from initiating impeachment charges against Tancangco, he said, without indicating if he supported the move.

Namfrel chair Jose Concepcion has said he was only waiting to complete the necessary documents before filing the impeachment charge against Tancangco in Congress.

He said the evidence against Tancangco was "very strong, strong enough to warrant impeachment."
Blanche S. Rivera



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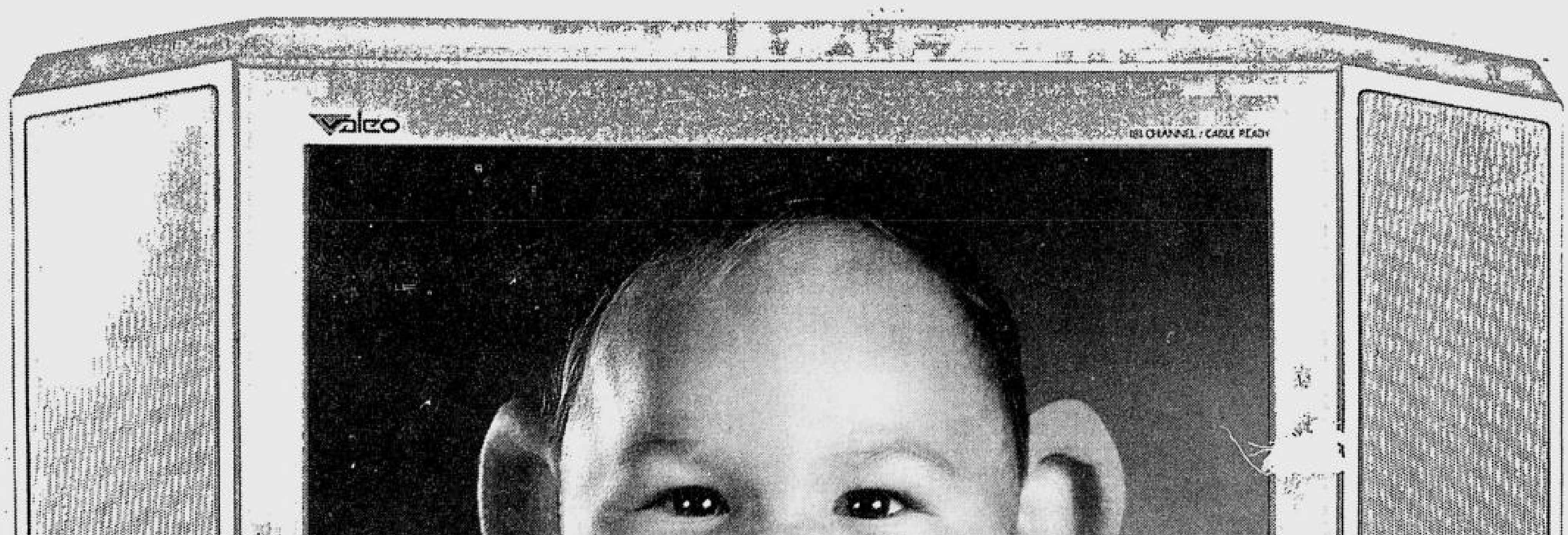

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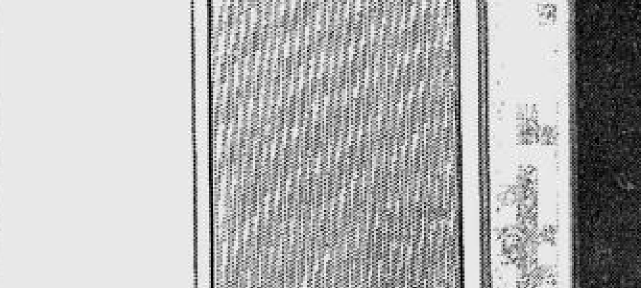

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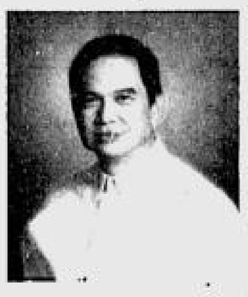

Greetings

From PAO President

An event that will stimulate the mind, touch the heart and nourish the soul. An appropriate description for this year's annual convention – Visual Odyssey 2001.

With nothing less than the best as their operating framework, your organizing committee (CME) has painstakingly prepared a series of symposia with foreign speakers who are truly the pioneers and innovators in their own field of specialization. To make sure their sharing will be relevant to our present situation and environment, we have invited our very own educators and researchers to compliment their views.

The Secretary of Health, Dr. Manuel Dayrit, will grace the occasion to deliver a very crucial message on the commitment of the Department of Health to the eye care program of the country. We, as an organization and members of the PAO, must then be prepared to respond to the challenge he will surely throw our way.

The prevention of blindness symposia will refocus and revisit small incision ECCE surgery as an alternative, and possibly faster method, to answer the growing cataract backlog and increasing operative cost.
Skills transfer, scientific free papers, the Resident Research Paper Contest, the Photo Contest, the reformatted Fellowship Night – all of these and much more await you as we again spend a few days in fellowship commonly bonded by our relentless pursuit for excellence!

I also wish to take this opportunity to thank all of you, my fellow ophthalmologists for the support, the challenges, and the opportunity to be your fellow traveler in the PAO. We have not always journeyed over smooth roads. There have been bumpy moments, due maybe to the normal geography of the land, but at other times, roadblocks have been created to our surprise. But we can be proud that through it all, we have all kept our sights on a common destination –
a strong, cohesive and world-class organization, made up of members who have but one goal in mind – to provide the best-in-class eye care to our patients and to empower our poorer countrymen with the gift of sight.

Maraming Salamat and MABUHAY!!!

Noel G. Chua, MD
President, Philippine Academy of Ophthalmology

Greetings

From Chair, Organizing Committee

Warmest greetings to everyone!

2001: A Visual Odyssey. This year's convention title was adopted from the 1968 science fiction classic by producer Stanley Kubrick. In that movie, the audience was treated to a rare cinematic experience of "space travel" or, "space odyssey". Similarly, it is the concept of the organizing committee to provide delegates to this year's convention with an opportunity to journey through man's visual development and learn about certain ocular conditions that may occur at these different stages. Thus, "a visual odyssey".

Aptly, the convention starts with discussion on a vision threatening condition in the premature infant – retinopathy of prematurity. Then we move on to childhood and adolescent conditions: nystagmus, refractive surgery in children, Duane syndrome. Adult affectations like optic neuropathies, retinopathies, glaucoma, trauma, refractive surgery, among other conditions, will be discussed by a distinguished roster of foreign and local faculty. And finally, we end the sessions on cataract, an ocular condition that affects the elderly.

More than this "visual odyssey", the organizers have prepared a few instructional courses: cataract, diabetic retinopathy, Oculoplasty, ophthalmic nursing and ophthalmic assisting. Note worthy among these is the course on "Flaps and Grafts" where registrants will be taught and be made to do basic oculplastic procedures on bovine thigh.

Finally, in order for it to be a well-rounded convention, the accompanying persons' program has likewise been invigorated and made more inviting with several activities worth attending.

Again, let me reiterate the Academy's invitation to all prospective delegates. Let us all come together at the EDSA Shangri-La from November 29, 2001 to December 1, 2001 and experience a "Visual Odyssey".

Mabuhay!!

Romulo N. Aguilar, MD, PhD
Chair, Organizing Committee

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Philippine Academy of Ophthalmology Year-end Convention

A VISUAL ODYSSEY

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President

Philippine Society of Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus
Evelyn L. Ramos-Cortes, MD
President

Philippine Society of Ophthalmic and Reconstructive Surgery
Reynaldo Ma. Javate, MD
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Western Visayas Academy Of Ophthalmology	RICARDO L. GALLAGA, M.D.
Eastern Visayas Society Of Ophthalmology	AMELIA G. REYES, M.D.

Topics for Discussion

Thursday, November 29

Retinopathy of Prematurity
Lectures will cover screening of the high-risk population, current modes of management, evolution of retinal detachment, and management of the aftermath of this severely debilitating disease.

Pediatric Ophthalmology & Strabismus
Topics to be discussed include Duane syndrome, severe rectus muscle injury, nystagmus as well as clinical utility and recommendations in refractive surgery. Diagnostic pearls and advances in management will be the thrust of the session.

Friday, November 30

Neuro-Ophthalmology
Highlights the more common neuro-ophthalmic cases seen locally including an update on neuro-ophthalmology in the last five years, neuro-imaging and visual field interpretation for general ophthalmologists, the most common type of toxic optic neuropathy seen locally, and diagnosis and management of cranial nerve palsies.

Glaucoma
Provides the general ophthalmologist and the glaucoma specialist a review of the current approaches and advances to the medical and surgical treatment of glaucoma.

Cornea
This session aims to review and provide an update on corneal diseases and immunology. It also aims to show the effects of excimer laser on the cornea, especially as far as healing and complications are concerned.

Oculoplasty
Update on current trends regarding eye trauma and anophthalmia. There will also be an introduction on the expanded uses of Botulinum Toxin in ophthalmology practice.

Ocular Inflammation
This session will discuss the therapeutic implications of current immunology concepts in uveitis.

Pediatric Ophthalmology & Strabismus
The strabismus symposium is tailored for both beginning strabismus surgeons and ophthalmologists with a keen interest in adult strabismus. Strabismus following retinal detachment surgery, its different presentations, mechanisms and management will be discussed. Pearls and modifications of adjustable suture technique in strabismus surgery in adults will be presented in this forum.

Neuro-Ophthalmology
Designed for both general and neuro-ophthalmologists, this session is a review of the different diagnosis and management of unilateral and bilateral optic disc edemas with emphasis on common optic neuropathies.

Saturday, December 1

Cataract Symposium
This session will tackle the latest trends and challenges in cataract surgery including phacoemulsification combined with glaucoma and retinal surgery and "Piggy Back" implants. Also included will be a discussion on the future of cataract surgery.

Committee On Sight Preservation Symposium
The Prevention of Blindness Symposium aspires to enhance our Cataract Surgical Rate (CSR) through the inspiring experiences of Dr. Albrecht Hennig, who, in his own way, does high volume, high quality, yet low cost cataract surgery in Nepal. The commitment of the Department of Health by Dr. Dayrit and update on the status of VISION 2020 (The Right to Sight) seek to re-awaken our sense of responsibility as ophthalmologists… the rightful eye care providers.

Refractive Surgery Symposium
This session will discuss the impact of refractive surgery as current ophthalmologic practice as well as the common pitfalls in refractive surgery. Latest techniques to improve outcomes, with emphasis on "customized" refractive surgery will also be addressed.

Committee On Continuing Education

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Romulo N. Aguilar, MD
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Raoul Paolo D. Henson, MD
Physical Arrangements

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Rolando Enrique D. Domingo, MD
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Residents Research Paper Contest

Ma. Dominga B. Padilla, MD
Public Relations and Information

MILESTONES

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Five leading eye problems in the Philippines

1. Cataract

A cataract is formed when the lens of the eye, which is normally clear at birth and is responsible for focusing light and producing sharp images, becomes cloudy and hardens. As the opacity thickens, it prevents light rays from passing through the lens and focusing on the retina, resulting in a loss of visual function. Most cataracts are age-related, and thus usually affect adults aged 50 and older. In fact, poor vision from cataracts affects 60 percent of all adults over age 60. However, cataracts affect all ages, as they can also result from injury, heredity, medications, or other systemic or ocular diseases. Cataracts, however, may be cured and damage is reversible.

Treatment

Cataracts are treated with surgical removal of the lens. The two most common methods used today are Extracapsular Cataract Extraction (ECCE) and Phakoemulsification (phaco). In ECCE, the cataract is removed "en toto" and sutures are used to close the incision. In phaco, also known as "stitchless cataract surgery", the cataract is divided and aspirated through a very small 3 mm incision by ultrasound energy. Because of the small incision, no sutures are necessary. In both techniques, an intraocular lens (IOL) is implanted to restore vision. In phaco, a foldable IOL that unfolds once inside the eye is generally used. Cataract surgery is generally an outpatient surgery.

While ECCE is offered by almost all hospitals throughout the country, phacoemulsification is available in all major eye centers and most tertiary hospitals in the Philippines where there are "phaco" machines. Phacoemulsification for cataract surgery has been around in the Philippines since the mid 1990's although it has evolved into a more refined technique since then.

The PAO continuously works with the Department of Health and various non-governmental organizations to address the country's cataract backlog as mandated by the World Health Organization.

2. Glaucoma

Glaucoma is a disease that can cause irreversible damage to the optic nerve as a result of abnormal eye pressures. The build-up of pressure to the optic nerve is caused by insufficient drainage of the aqueous humor, a liquid that continually flows in the eye (separate from tears).

The optic nerve carries thousands of messages from the eye to the brain that join together and provide us with our vision. The build-up of pressure can damage the optic nerve fibers causing blind spots to develop and eventually lead to total blindness. There are four types of glaucoma: the primary chronic open-angle glaucoma; angle closure glaucoma; secondary glaucoma and; congenital glaucoma.

Treatment

a) Most open angle glaucoma can be treated with eye drops that lower eye pressure.
b) Laser Iridotomy for angle closure glaucoma (a microscopic hole is made on the iris in order to provide a continuous passage way for aqueous humor and to avoid angle closure)
c) Laser gonioplasty for angle closure glaucoma (laser energy is used to reshape the angle of the eye and to open an otherwise narrow angle)
d) Laser trabeculoplasty for Primary open angle glaucoma (laser energy is used to modify the micro architecture of the angle of the eye to make drainage of aqueous more efficient)
e) Trans-scleral cyclo- photoablation for far advanced glaucoma in eyes with poor or no vision: (laser energy is used to destroy the ciliary body of the eye. The ciliary body is the part of the eye the produces aqueous humor. This treatment is reserved for severely damaged eyes with poor or no more vision in whom eye drops and/or surgery have had no successful pressure-lowering effect.
f) Filtering surgery or trabeculectomy

3. Diabetic retinopathy

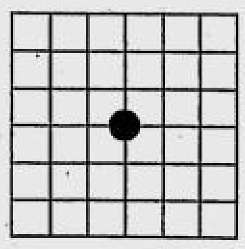
Diabetic retinopathy is a disorder of the retinal blood vessels resulting from diabetes mellitus. Diabetic retinopathy is the leading cause of new blindness in working adults in developed countries. People with diabetes mellitus should have an eye check up at least once a year. Early detection is very important.

Treatment

a) Laser treatment of the retina
b) Vitrectomy and/or membranectomy in more severe cases (diabetic retinopathy can result in bleeding inside the eye and the formation of membranes inside the eye that can lead to severe vision loss. These can be treated surgically by means of vitrectomies and membranectomies.
c) Scleral buckling with or without intraocular gas or silicone oil injection (used to treat retinal detachment, one of the complications of diabetic retinopathy).

4. Macular Degeneration

In macular degeneration, the light-sensing cells of the macula mysteriously malfunction and may over time cease to work. Macular degeneration occurs most often in people over 60 years old, in which case it is called Age Related Macular Degeneration (ARMD). Much less common are several hereditary forms of macular degeneration, which usually affect children or teenagers.



AMSLER GRID TEST
Set the grid at eye level and about 30 cm in front of you. Covering one eye with your hand, focus on the center dot with the uncovered eye.

Check that you can see the four corners of the grid. If the grid appears to be blurred, distorted, discolored or in any way abnormal, refer to your eye care professional immediately to further assess your visual function and the health of your retina.

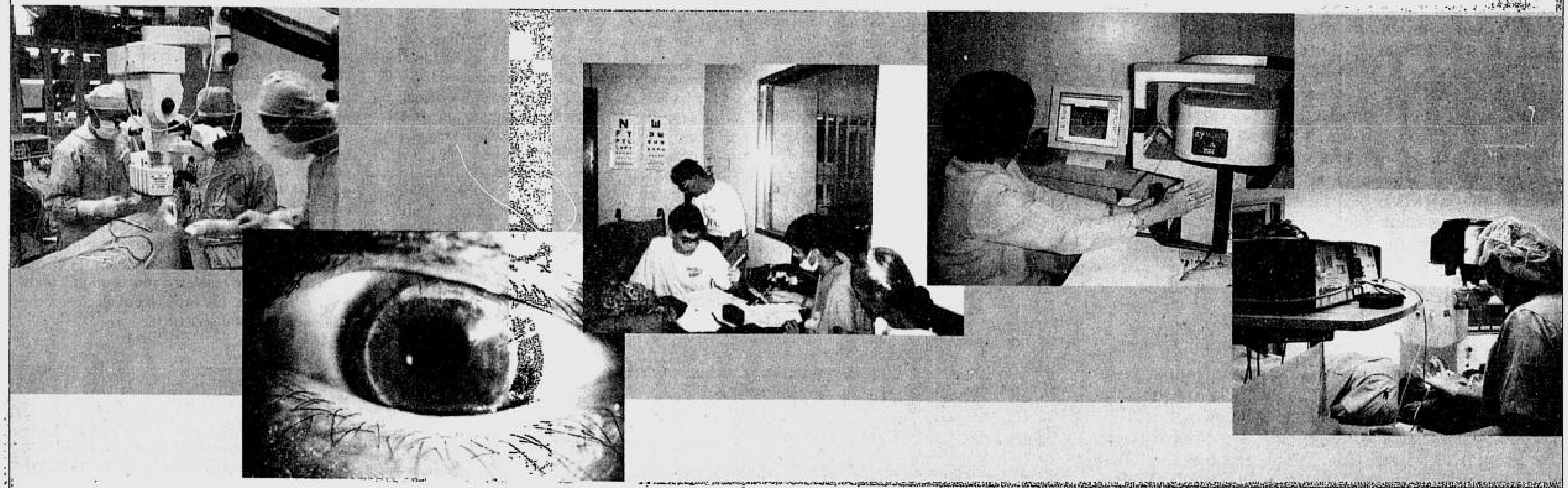
Treatment

This used to be considered untreatable but now certain types can now be treated with laser photocoagulation and lately a treatment modality called Photodynamic Therapy (PTT). While laser photocoagulation is largely available throughout the country, PTT is currently only available in a few centers in Metro-Manila.

5. Corneal Blindness

There are many causes of corneal blindness and much of them depend on the ocular diseases common in a particular geographical region.

In the Philippines, the most common causes of corneal blindness are infections of the eye and trauma; both of which are preventable.



Simple Tips to Prevent Corneal Blindness

Corneal blindness from eye infections and trauma can be prevented by means of the following simple procedures:

a) Wash hands frequently and avoid touching the eyes
b) Proper hygiene of contact lenses
c) Remove contact lenses as soon as any discomfort or redness is noted, and see an ophthalmologist right away.
d) Avoid using just any kind of eye drops on the eye in case irritation occurs. Always consult an ophthalmologist first. Not all eye drops are the same. A cure for one disease may worsen other eye diseases.
e) Wash eyes right away with copious amount of clean, running water when they are hit by any chemicals or foreign material. Then see an ophthalmologist right away.
f) Do not attempt to remove a foreign object lodged on the cornea by means of rubbing your eyes as this may cause the object to embed itself deeper into the cornea.

Trauma to the eye is often encountered in the work place and at home while doing daily chores. To avoid trauma to the eye, Always wear eye safety gear when doing any job that may endanger your eyes (e.g. welding, using power drills, cleaning with caustic substances like clog removers, etc.)

Treatment

Corneal transplantation is often the only way to alleviate corneal blindness.

Corneal blindness has now been addressed by the Santa Lucia International Eye Bank of Manila the central eye banking facility that supplies transplantable eye tissue all over the country. The eye bank processes over 600 eye tissues a year--all of which are from local eye and cornea donors.

The country is now self-sufficient as far as corneal tissue is concerned. Eye tissue is flown free of charge by partner airlines and couriers. (PAL, Cebu Pacific, LBC, FEDEX) This makes it possible for eye surgeons around the country to perform corneal transplants when and where they need them. For more information about corneal transplants you may call the eye bank at (02) 893-5995. They can refer you to a qualified corneal surgeon nearest you.

ATTENTION ALL PATIENTS TAKING AND DOCTORS PRESCRIBING THE TUBERCULOSIS DRUG ETHAMBUTOL

Over the last year, ophthalmologists have observed a rising incidence of eye complications in patients taking the tuberculosis drug, Ethambutol. The symptoms include blurred vision, eye pain and red-green color blindness. We are concerned that high or prolonged doses may eventually cause permanent ocular damage. The medical term for this condition is "Toxic Optic Neuropathy".

We enjoin tuberculosis patients taking Ethambutol to have their eyes checked for any ocular side effects of the drug. We also ask doctors to instruct their tuberculosis patients on ethambutol to have an ophthalmic evaluation at least every four months.

Entrust your eyesight to a qualified ophthalmologist.
For information about the Philippine Academy of
Ophthalmology accredited members or other
eye diseases and conditions contact:

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Philippine Academy of Ophthalmology Inc.
3/F, 992 North EDSA 1105 Quezon City,
Metro Manila Philippines
• Tels: (+632) 927-2317; (+632) 925-3789
• Fax: (+632) 924-6550
• E-mail: pao@pao.org.ph
• Website:http:// www.pao.org.ph

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While ECCE is offered by almost all hospitals throughout the country, phacoemulsification is available in all major eye centers and most tertiary hospitals in the Philippines where there are "phaco" machines. Phacoemulsification for cataract surgery has been around in the Philippines since the mid 1990's although it has evolved into a more refined technique since then.

Medical Mission

The PAO continuously works with the Department of Health and various non-governmental organizations to address the country's cataract backlog as mandated by the World Health Organization.

2. Glaucoma

Glaucoma is a disease that can cause irreversible damage to the optic nerve as a result of abnormal eye pressures. The build-up of pressure to the optic nerve is caused by insufficient drainage of the aqueous humor, a liquid that continually flows in the eye (separate from tears).

The optic nerve carries thousands of messages from the eye to the brain that join together and provide us with our vision. The build-up of pressure can damage the optic nerve fibers causing blind spots to develop and eventually lead to total blindness. There are four types of glaucoma: the primary chronic open-angle glaucoma; angle closure glaucoma; secondary glaucoma and; congenital glaucoma.

Treatment

a) Most open angle glaucoma can be treated with eye drops that lower eye pressure.
b) Laser Iridotomy for angle closure glaucoma (a microscopic hole is made on the iris in order to provide a continuous passage way for aqueous humor and to avoid angle closure)
c) Laser gonioplasty for angle closure glaucoma (laser energy is used to reshape the angle of the eye and to open an otherwise narrow angle)
d) Laser trabeculoplasty for Primary open angle glaucoma (laser energy is used to modify the micro architecture of the angle of the eye to make drainage of aqueous more efficient)
e) Trans-scleral cyclo- photoablation for far advanced glaucoma in eyes with poor or no vision: (laser energy is used to destroy the ciliary body of the eye. The ciliary body is the part of the eye the produces aqueous humor. This treatment is reserved for severely damaged eyes with poor or no more vision in whom eye drops and/or surgery have had no successful pressure-lowering effect.
f) Filtering surgery or trabeculectomy

3. Diabetic retinopathy

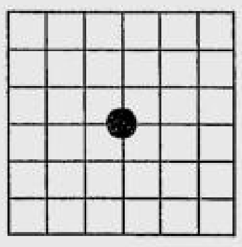
Diabetic retinopathy is a disorder of the retinal blood vessels resulting from diabetes mellitus. Diabetic retinopathy is the leading cause of new blindness in working adults in developed countries. People with diabetes mellitus should have an eye check up at least once a year. Early detection is very important.

Treatment

a) Laser treatment of the retina
b) Vitrectomy and/or membranectomy in more severe cases (diabetic retinopathy can result in bleeding inside the eye and the formation of membranes inside the eye that can lead to severe vision loss. These can be treated surgically by means of vitrectomies and membranectomies.
c) Scleral buckling with or without intraocular gas or silicone oil injection (used to treat retinal detachment, one of the complications of diabetic retinopathy).

4. Macular Degeneration

In macular degeneration, the light-sensing cells of the macula mysteriously malfunction and may over time cease to work. Macular degeneration occurs most often in people over 60 years old, in which case it is called Age Related Macular Degeneration (ARMD). Much less common are several hereditary forms of macular degeneration, which usually affect children or teenagers.



AMSLER GRID TEST
Set the grid at eye level and about 30 cm in front of you. Covering one eye with your hand, focus on the center dot with the uncovered eye.

Check that you can see the four corners of the grid. If the grid appears to be blurred, distorted, discolored or in any way abnormal, refer to your eye care professional immediately to further assess your visual function and the health of your retina.

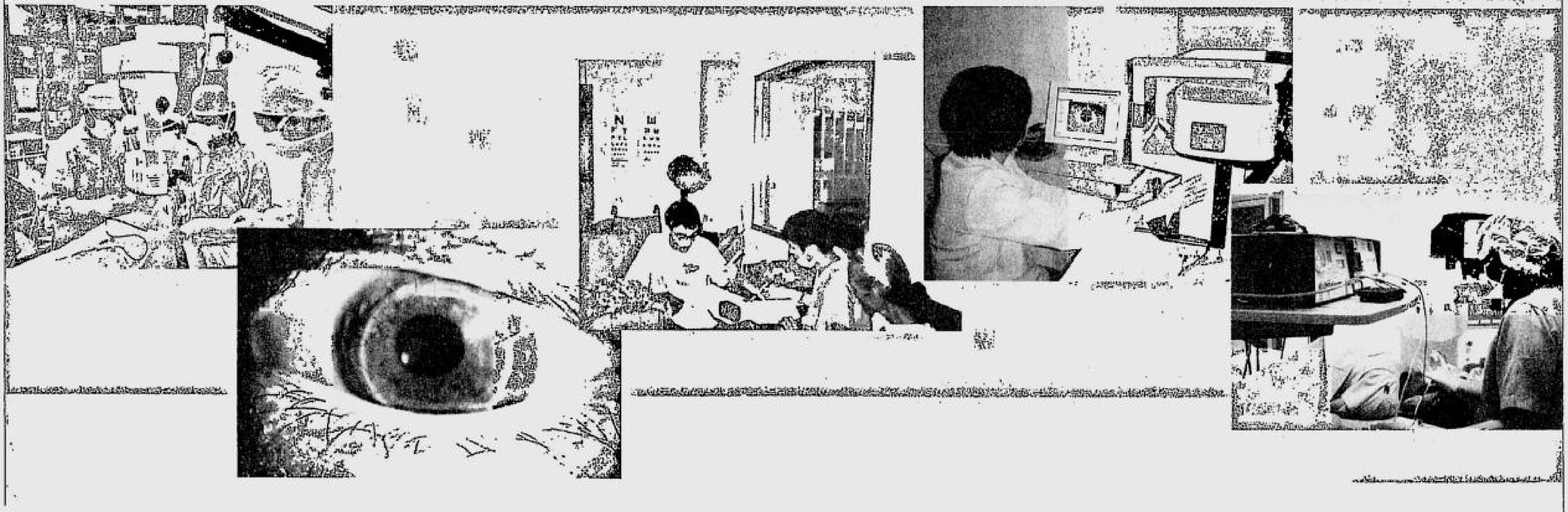
Treatment

This used to be considered untreatable but now certain types can now be treated with laser photocoagulation and lately a treatment modality called Photodynamic Therapy (PTT). While laser photocoagulation is largely available throughout the country, PTT is currently only available in a few centers in Metro-Manila.

5. Corneal Blindness

There are many causes of corneal blindness and much of them depend on the ocular diseases common in a particular geographical region.

In the Philippines, the most common causes of corneal blindness are infections of the eye and trauma; both of which are preventable.



Simple Tips to Prevent Corneal Blindness

Corneal blindness from eye infections and trauma can be prevented by means of the following simple procedures:

a) Wash hands frequently and avoid touching the eyes
b) Proper hygiene of contact lenses
c) Remove contact lenses as soon as any discomfort or redness is noted, and see an ophthalmologist right away.
d) Avoid using just any kind of eye drops on the eye in case irritation occurs. Always consult an ophthalmologist first. Not all eye drops are the same. A cure for one disease may worsen other eye diseases.
e) Wash eyes right away with copious amount of clean, running water when they are hit by any chemicals or foreign material. Then see an ophthalmologist right away.
f) Do not attempt to remove a foreign object lodged on the cornea by means of rubbing your eyes as this may cause the object to embed itself deeper into the cornea.

Trauma to the eye is often encountered in the work place and at home while doing daily chores. To avoid trauma to the eye, Always wear eye safety gear when doing any job that may endanger your eyes (e.g. welding, using power drills, cleaning with caustic substances like clog removers, etc.)

Treatment

Corneal transplantation is often the only way to alleviate corneal blindness.

Corneal blindness has now been addressed by the Santa Lucia International Eye Bank of Manila the central eye banking facility that supplies transplantable eye tissue all over the country. The eye bank processes over 600 eye tissues a year--all of which are from local eye and cornea donors.

The country is now self-sufficient as far as corneal tissue is concerned. Eye tissue is flown free of charge by partner airlines and couriers. (PAL, Cebu Pacific, LBC, FEDEX) This makes it possible for eye surgeons around the country to perform corneal transplants when and where they need them. For more information about corneal transplants you may call the eye bank at (02) 893-5995. They can refer you to a qualified corneal surgeon nearest you.

ATTENTION ALL PATIENTS TAKING AND DOCTORS PRESCRIBING THE TUBERCULOSIS DRUG ETHAMBUTOL

Over the last year, ophthalmologists have observed a rising incidence of eye complications in patients taking the tuberculosis drug, Ethambutol. The symptoms include blurred vision, eye pain and red-green color blindness. We are concerned that high or prolonged doses may eventually cause permanent ocular damage. The medical term for this condition is "Toxic Optic Neuropathy".

We enjoin tuberculosis patients taking Ethambutol to have their eyes checked for any ocular side effects of the drug. We also ask doctors to instruct their tuberculosis patients on ethambutol to have an ophthalmic evaluation at least every four months.

Entrust your eyesight to a qualified ophthalmologist.
For information about the Philippine Academy of
Ophthalmology accredited members or other
eye diseases and conditions contact:

PHILIPPINE ACADEMY
1945
OF OPHTHALMOLOGY

Philippine Academy of Ophthalmology Inc.
3/F, 992 North EDSA 1105 Quezon City,
Metro Manila Philippines
- **Tels: (+632) 927-2317; (+632) 925-3789**
- **Fax: (+632) 924-6550**
- **E-mail: pao@pao.org.ph**
- **Website:http:// www.pao.org.ph**

e-mail: feedback@inquirer.com.ph website: http://www.inq7.net

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Change in the ARMM

EDITORIAL

CHARGES of widespread cheating have marred last Monday's election of new officials in the expanded Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. This development, while not new in Philippine elections (remember the birds and bees that voted in past elections in Lanao), does not augur well for the post-Nur Misuari administration of the ARMM.

The charges come in the wake of the armed clashes in Jolo and Zamboanga where Misuari's armed men representing a faction of the Moro National Liberation Front have staged a rebellion in a desperate effort to disrupt the polls. This turbulence should be seen properly as the dying paroxysms of a passing era in the ARMM and the entry of a new one. Misuari, who has been arrested in Malaysia after abandoning his men, is now a fugitive from Philippine justice. His flight represents the close of an era of lost opportunities for the ARMM, squandered by Misuari's profligate and administratively barren leadership.

It is unfortunate that last Monday's elections have been marred by charges of fraud because two of the leading candidates for ARMM governor, Dr. Parouk Hussin and Ibrahim "Toto" Paglas, represent a modernizing outlook and a departure from Misuari's leadership style. Either of them offers hope for a real change in the region and the coming of a new dawn when economic resources will flow into the ARMM. If it is true that the Macapagal administration, which backs Hussin, used strong-arm methods to ensure the victory of Hussin, such efforts could only spoil the advent of change in the ARMM.

It may take a few more days before we will know who won, given that delay is also customary in Philippine elections, be they national or regional. A delay in the counting of votes in the ARMM, however, helps reinforce charges that some political operators are preparing to tamper with returns. This should never be allowed to cast a shadow on the legitimacy of the declared winner.

Hussin is associated with a bloc in the MNLF which broke away from Misuari and which, through the bloc's Committee of 15, deposed Misuari as chair of the MNLF. This break has transferred leadership of the MNLF from Misuari and his cohorts who represent the warrior caste known more for their fighting skills but deficient in administrative ability to run a regional government efficiently and competently. Hussin is a diplomat with a long experience in negotiations for a peace settlement in Mindanao.

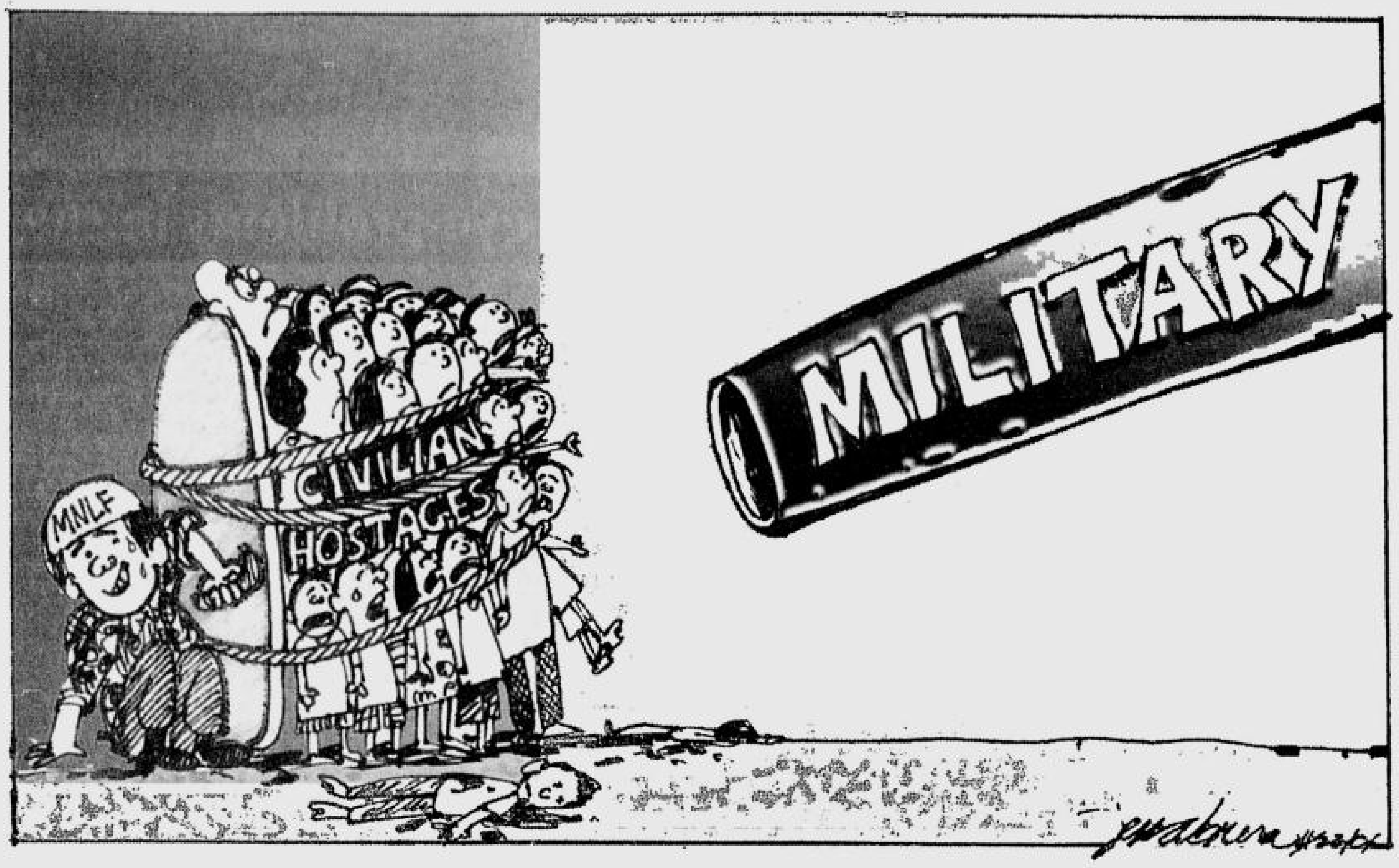
Paglas is no less modern in his outlook. He belongs to the entrepreneurial class who runs a chain of enterprises, including agriculture and transportation. He is descended from the family of former Sen. Salipada Pendatun, and is credited with transforming, as mayor, Datu Paglas town in Maguindanao into a "miracle town" bustling with business activity and with 100 percent employment.

The transformation of a community previously known for its local political feuds and law and order problem demonstrates how a modernizing approach can serve as a model of leadership that can work in the development of Muslim areas of Mindanao.

Because of similarities in their outlook, the ARMM stands to benefit from a leadership change, whether its governor is Paglas or Hussin. Things are changing despite the rebellions and turbulence in the region. They are not dramatic, but they are real change.

During Monday's elections, ARMM voters were offered desirable leadership choices. Thus, the more important event is that a new era has arrived in the ARMM, moving it away from a period when Islamic countries withheld economic assistance to the region, following the creation of the ARMM and the 1996 peace agreement between the Ramos administration and Misuari's MNLF, because they were not happy with the dissipation of aid resources by the Misuari regime.

The new ARMM administration would be off to a good start if the results of the vote are not tampered with.



Many NPAs in Macapagal Cabinet

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

CONGRESS is about to go on a Christmas recess but the Commission on Appointments has confirmed only four Cabinet members: Public Works Secretary Simeon Datumanong, Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo, Social Welfare Secretary Dinky Soliman and Education Secretary Raul Roco. The others will surely be bypassed again.

With the battle lines clearly drawn in the CA, not one of the remaining Cabinet members can sail through the gauntlet as easily as the first four. While a majority vote is needed for rejection, only one CA member opposing the confirmation of a Cabinet member is enough to bypass him, according to Section 20 of CA rules. And by tradition, two bypasses are enough to have the Cabinet member replaced. It is likely, therefore, that President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo will have to revamp her Cabinet early in the new year.

This is no great loss, and if the President is smart, she should quickly do that. For her Cabinet has been infiltrated by many NPAs or nonperforming assets. Those who are performing hide their performances under the table because what they do are shameful and even illegal.

In fact, no administration ever has had as many controversial Cabinet men (the emphasis is on men because the women Cabinet members are not controversial, with the possible exception of former Secretary Vicky Garchitorena of the Presidential Management Staff, who has resigned; even she couldn't stomach the intrigues and rottenness in Malacañang.

The most controversial Cabinet men are led by the two Alvarezes (Transportation Secretary Pantaleon and Environment Secretary Heherson) and the Perezes (Justice Secretary Hernando and Energy Secretary Vincent).

Pantaleon Alvarez is, of course, in deep s—t with the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3 contract with Piatco. The contract is so onerous, according to critics, that Alvarez has the most number of opposers to his confirmation, not to mention the criminal and administrative charges filed against him.

The noisiest opposers are the MIA-NAIA Association of Service Operators whose contracts Piatco refuses to honor, and the city council of Angeles City and multi-sectoral organizations of Central Luzon because the Piatco contract limits the activities and prohibits the development of the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport in Clark and other international airports in Luzon.

Heherson Alvarez has a running feud with his former Environment Management Bureau director Peter Abaya over the over-importation of the banned ozone-depleting substances (ODS). On a bigger scale, there are the awards of huge, no, gargantuan, areas of forest lands to foreign companies, in addition to the continued rape of what remains of the country's forests.

To make this piece short, we will simply mention what immediately comes to the mind of the public at the mention of each Cabinet member:

Hernando Perez: fat bank accounts; he issues decisions to justify questionable transactions.

Vincent Perez: high electric rates, not in the National Power Corp.

Interior Secretary Joey Lina: squatter coddler; principal sponsor of "that stupid Lina Law" that worsened the squatting problem; crime rate rose when he assumed office; can't rein in abuses by local government officials.

Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon: long weekends.

Trade Secretary Mar Roxas: protector of cement cartel; a big disappointment.

Agriculture Secretary Leonardo Montemayor: NPA (non-performing asset).

Agrarian Reform Secretary Hernani Braganza: another NPA.

Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes: can't subdue a small band of bandits, the Abu Sayyaf.

Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho: will bury us all deeper in debt. Instead of collecting taxes to raise funds, he knows only how to float all sorts of bonds which our children and grandchildren will eventually have to pay. Yet he boasts that he can balance the budget, or at least reduce the deficit. He will do it with borrowed money.

* * *

Another body that should be revamped is the Commission on Elections. Since it is an independent constitutional body, all the seven commissioners should resign. If they don't, the Senate should impeach them.

Chair Alfredo Benipayo has already offered to resign with his two commissioner-allies, but the four others led by Commissioner Luzviminda Tancangco want to hold on to their positions. With them supervising the 2004 presidential elections, the result is too horrible to contemplate.

Benipayo et al. should fulfill their offer to resign and the Senate should impeach the four others. They have already proven that they are all unfit to run the Comelec, a constitutional body upon which rests the integrity of elections, the foundation of our democracy.

True magic

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

THERE was a strange ritual going on in the moviehouse when I watched "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone" at SM City last week. My kid was doing a running commentary on the movie—despite my hushed and desperate pleas for him to cease and desist—comparing it with the book. The dialogue in the movie, he kept saying, was pretty much the same as in the book, often borrowing the exact words. I didn't need to ask him at any time if he liked the movie. The sheer pleasure of it registered in his voice.

That wasn't the strange ritual. The strange ritual was that the same thing was happening in many parts of the moviehouse. There was a distinct hubbub hovering in the dark, a sustained murmur of small voices commenting on the movie while it unfolded its wonders.

Beside us were several kids, probably between the ages of 10 to 13, who were squealing with delight each time a character popped out. They would say his/her/its name out loud with great familiarity, comparing the way the movie gave face and form to the characters with the way they did so in their minds. They were not disappointed. One movie critic, if I remember right, said much the same thing: The movie matched the way she herself imagined it. The sentiment was obviously shared by the audience in that moviehouse in that witching hour that night.

That was part of the magic of the movie. This wasn't merely an audience watching an entertainment fare passively, this was a group of people actively participating in the creation of a story. This wasn't just a gaggle of bedraggled urban dwellers escaping into a world of fantasy for a couple of hours, this was a group of wide-eyed kids, aged 5 to 95, bathing in the communal waters of a shared experience, or dream.

Before I watched the movie, I had read some critics protesting the movie's religious faithfulness to the book, which they thought to have taken the magic out of moviemaking. I am not so sure that it does. There are limits to what you can do with something that has become monstrously popular, or indeed that has created a cultist following. I myself am vastly curious to see what the new "Lord of the Rings" movie will look like. I saw the Ralph Bakshi version in the 1970s, a serious animation that put off parents who had brought their kids to the moviehouse expecting to see a Walt Disney movie. And as is the case of the audience of "Sorcerer's Stone," I kept comparing Bakshi's visualization with the book—or books (it is a trilogy). Which is also to say, I kept comparing the way Bakshi realized Tolkien's story on film with the way I pictured it in my mind.

Tolkien is by no means as hugely popular as Harry Potter, though it has its own cultist following (which includes me). You are tasked with translating the first Harry Potter into a movie, and you too will balk at straying too far from the original vision. Harry Potter has developed a life of his own, not unlike Sherlock Holmes, who quite incidentally remains the only fictional character with an entire biography devoted to him. At the very least, from the stick end, audiences will tear your head off, metaphorically or even literally, for your faithlessness, or betrayal, which no magic may ever undo. At the very most, from the carrot end, there is much joy in rising up to the challenge of giving shape to something communally imagined, and delighting audiences with the shock of recognition.

But the movie is magical in yet another respect, which goes beyond its intrinsic value. Or indeed beyond the intrinsic value of the book itself, though its intrinsic value is no mean matter in itself. J.K. Rowling's sorcerer's world has a charm all its own. It draws its power not from departing from the known and scaling the heights of the fantastic but by wringing out the strange and unusual from the utterly familiar. It is probably closer in inspiration to Hitchcock than to Tolkien. Hitchcock drew his suspense by investing the most humdrum or everyday things with terror, the most famous of them being the shower room. Rowling draws her sorcery from the most ordinary and commonplace things, the concept of a school—not every child's favorite place—turned into a magician's laboratory being chief of them. It is no small feat of the imagination.

But beyond that intrinsic value, Harry Potter weaves another kind of magic. Which you will not find in animé, hitherto the object of passionate attention of today's kids, or in "Star Wars," hitherto also the heroic adventure that drew a dedicated following from a previous generation. Which is that Harry Potter has opened up one truly, genuinely, vast and wonderful world of magic, or retrieved it from the darkness that has welled up all around it and threatened to swallow it. That is the world of Reading.

That is the magical world of books, of literature, of the written word. A world that has been pushed back to the nether regions, or been made to disappear by a secret sorcerer, from today's kids. The theme of many stories of magic has been the loss of magic with the march of technology, technology having brought many good things but scaled down the limits of the imagination. There is a modern equivalent for that, which is the loss reading with the advance of television and the personal computer, the television and the personal computer also having brought many good things but fettered the imagination.

I understand that kids have been flocking to bookstores of late, scrambling to get the last copies of the Harry Potter series. My own kid has only just begun to discover the world of books, and at that barely, something I have not been able to inspire in him, all my sorcerer's tricks being roundly def[illegible] the PC. If only [illegible] that, my boundless th[illegible]o Harry, or Joanne which is what the "J" stands for.

That is their greatest magic trick of all.

'Bara-bara' politics

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

I RETURNED home to find that the opposition has zeroed in on President Macapagal in the case of the telecommunications firm Philippine Communications Clearinghouse Inc., and the coconut levy, and I immediately recalled what some political pundits told me not very long ago. They said the opposition would seek to destroy one by one the leaders of Edsa II and ultimately target the President herself. I noted that this time it's no longer First Gentleman Mike Arroyo who is the object of vilification, it is GMA herself.

Pacifico Marcelo, president of the PCCI., has alleged that last August, at the request of the President, he met "clandestinely" with her at the Palace after he was smuggled through the backdoor. Marcelo claimed that during that "secret" meeting, Ms Macapagal expressed her desire to get 51 percent of the PCCI by paying for part of the shares and getting some more shares for free.

After reading about this, I called Mai Jimenez, the President's appointments secretary and by next month the official-in-charge of official development assistance (ODA) funds, to ask what was going on.

* * *

Jimenez laughed and recalled that Marcelo had first asked to see the President toward the end of May. But in compliance with Ms Macapagal's own instructions that all individual project proponents be told to see the government official who has supervision over such project, she told Marcelo to see then Speaker (and now QC Mayor) Feliciano Belmonte, during whose term as House chief the PCCI franchise bill was passed. Marcelo didn't get to see the President that time.

Apparently, said Jimenez, Marcelo was quite persistent and managed to get an appointment with GMA through another woman serving the President, named Yasmin. The President now recalls that Marcelo requested to be fetched by her own car and they talked on Aug. 16.

Why did the President agree to see him? Mai surmised that the President wanted to hear his side on the PCCI controversy,

Jimenez stressed that after their conversation, the President never budged from her original decision last April to veto the franchise bill because it was inimical to the national interest.

* * *

I myself would not give credence to Marcelo's claim, for if the President truly wanted to cut a deal with him, the right time would have been in March or April, when the fate of the bill was still in her hands, and not in August when she had already vetoed it and only Congress could override her veto.

Now Marcelo is all over radio alleging that Ms Macapagal wanted a share of the PCCI in exchange for the refilling of that franchise bill and certifying it as urgent. But Ms Macapagal isn't that stupid. She fully realizes that certifying it could never be hidden from a prying press and vocal congressmen. In addition, there is talk in the telecom industry that Marcelo, who is an American citizen, is working as a dummy for Erap crony Jaime Dichaves in the PCCI.

The Bureau of Immigration and Deportation is after him because being an alien, he violated the law when he claimed to own over 80 percent of the PCCI. As Senate President Franklin Drilon pointed out, aliens are entitled to a maximum investment of only 40 percent in the telecom industry.

The smear tactic of the opposition backfired in the case of Mike Arroyo and now Gloria is fair game. But it's apparent that, as in the case of Robert Rivero, the opposition doesn't have the finesse to even invest its allegations with some semblance of credibility. The rule seems to be: distort the truth and manufacture evidence later. Theirs is *bara-bara* politics.

* * *

President Macapagal appears to be in the same boat as Mexican President Vicente Fox. The expectation is quite high for both of them to do something about their sluggish economies. GMA, however, may be in a slightly better position since the Philippine economy is projected to have a 2.9 percent growth this year, whereas Mexico's economy is feared to have a flat or even negative growth, since it is 88 percent dependent for its exports on the United States, which is also a major export market for the Philippines. Unfortunately for both countries, the United States has just slipped into a recession.

* * *

The son of a Spanish-born mother and an Irish-descended father with some Indian blood, President Fox, a former governor of his home state of Guanajuato, was also a longtime business executive, having been connected with Coca-Cola in Mexico, and a farmer on the side. So the nearly 100 million Mexicans are expecting him to understand what's ailing their economy, which is still not yet out of the crisis of 1994-95. Fox came into office a year ago with a 90 percent popularity rating, the first president elected from the opposition Partido Action Nacional after 72 years of uninterrupted rule by the Partido Revolucionario International which produced 11 presidents. But as he celebrated his first anniversary in office, Fox admitted that his popularity has gone down to 70 percent, and that "the Mexican citizen is certainly displeased because there is no economic growth." But the drop in popularity is not causing Fox to lose sleep, especially since "many other governments would be more than happy to have such a rating."

* * *

The similarities between both countries are abundant, aside from their common historical experience. Like the Philippines, which is dependent on the estimated $6 billion remitted annually by about six million Filipinos working overseas, Mexico is being propped up by the income remitted by some 10 million Mexicans working mostly in the United States. But unlike the Philippines, what's also keeping Mexico afloat is tourism and its oil production. Mexico is the fifth largest oil producer in the world and while I was unable to get the exact figures on tourism, it's obvious that foreign tourists flock there. Tour operators say, however, that they have been badly hit since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

But if it is any consolation, the poor state of their economies is not a problem of the Philippines and Mexico alone. Recently the heads of 21 countries of Latin America was well as Spain and Portugal held a two-day summit to tackle international terrorism and the worsening economic situation in their region. The Ibero-American leaders also discussed how they could help the Argentine economy, which is in danger of defaulting on payments of its $132 billion external debt—a major headache for the whole world. They were also worried about the decrease in capital flows and direct foreign investments in their region.

Still our leaders could draw lessons from the Ibero-American leaders who have shown unity in approaching their problems. Our leaders seem to like shooting down one another.

The Necklace

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

"THE NECKLACE" is the title of a memorable short story by Guy de Maupassant. It is also the nickname of favored method of assassination in Soweto: a spare tire is draped round the neck of the victim which is then set afire.

But "the necklace" in this instance is a method of natural family planning, actually a tool to help couples remember when the woman's fertile days are, during which they're supposed to avoid unprotected intercourse if they want to prevent pregnancy.

There are 12 "glow in the dark" beads in the necklace, representing the 12-day fertile window during which a woman could ovulate and counting the life span of the egg cell (12 to 24 hours) and of the sperm (three-five days). Nobody could quite explain why the 12 beads glow in the dark, but I suppose it's so that the woman could fish out the necklace in the dark and hold up the glowing beads to an insistent husband or partner.

Actually, the "necklace method" is known as the "Standard Days Method," because it works best for women who have a regular or standard menstrual cycle of from 26 to 32 days. Women who have "irregular" periods would be better off trying other NFP methods, such as the mucus or Billings method, or other modern means of contraception.

How does one use the "necklace method?" The necklace contains one red bead, representing the first day of menstruation. From here, either the woman or man should move a small rubber band one bead down for each day of her cycle. When the rubber band is on a "glowing bead," the couple should avoid sex or use other means of contraception if they wish to prevent a pregnancy. If they're working toward a pregnancy, this should also help them know that they should engage in sex during these 12 days to maximize the woman's chances of conceiving.

This of course is just my understanding of the method. Couples who wish to seriously give the necklace a try should seek counseling from a health care professional or an experienced user. I'm told couples have been able to use the method successfully after only one or two counseling sessions.

* * *

USED properly and under optimum conditions, foremost of which must be a cooperative spouse, the method has an effectiveness rate of around 95 percent. This is based on the findings of studies conducted by the Institute of Reproductive Health of Georgetown University among couples in the Philippines, Peru and Bolivia.

The SDM is also the cornerstone of a program launched by the Department of Health on "mainstreaming natural family planning" in the government's overall family planning program.

In a talk before the media, Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit said he was concerned about findings that the country seems to have reached a "resistance point" where family planning is concerned. Why don't 53 percent of Filipino women "in union" practice contraception? The government as well as foreign funders have tried numerous approaches to "sell" the concept of responsible parenthood and the practice of family planning to men and women of reproductive age, but progress seems to have been stymied. What else can be done to get past this resistance point? One of the possible answers, says Dayrit, is a finding that "only 14 percent of Filipino women know their fertile period." This indicates, he said, that "a large percentage of couples don't know the relationship between sex and the woman's fertile period." Would raising the "fertility awareness level" of Filipino couples encourage them toward greater sexual responsibility and make the essential connection between sex and fertility, namely pregnancy?

* * *

DAYRIT made it clear that government policy has not changed. "Our policy remains to make all methods of family planning available to couples," he said.

But while modern methods of natural family planning are counted among the so-called "cafeteria" of methods available to men and women, Dayrit admitted there is a need "to push NFP much harder than in the past." The health secretary is most gung-ho about the "necklace" method, which seems to be the most accessible of all NFP methods based on fertility awareness. Such methods, he adds, also encourages couples to be more open and frank in discussing fertility and other sexual issues between them, and men to take more responsibility for their sexual behavior.

Aside from the condom and vasectomy, NFP methods are the only ones that allow for what is known as "male participation" in family planning. Most other contraceptive methods are focused on women, or rather, women's reproductive systems. NFP methods, such as SDM, require neither chemicals or devices (safe for the necklace), but require open communication lines and cooperation.

* * *

LET me add a caveat, though.

Of course, such an essential issue as managing one's fertility and the number and frequency of children should be settled by mutual consultation and shared decision-making between both parties involved in starting a pregnancy. Indeed, it could even enhance the marital relationship, and make both partners better parents.

But such communication may not always be possible for all couples. Some relationships may even be flawed from the start. And as former Health Secretary and now Sen. Juan Flavier put it so succinctly: "What happens when the man comes home drunk and wanting sex?" I doubt very much if he would be in any mood for meaningful conversation or be put off by a bead glowing in the dark.

Violence against women also figures in the equation. Can a woman under constant threat of violence from her husband meaningfully "negotiate" sex with him? Should untimely and unwanted pregnancies be added on to her already heavy burden of fear and battering?

But if her husband is the reasonable and responsible sort, and they are equally committed to a shared vision for themselves and the family they will found, then I say "good luck," and may the necklace be with you!

Crime and corpses

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

"THE CRIME that inevitably intrigues me most is murder. It is so final. At a fresh murder scene you can smell the blood and hear the screams; years later, they still echo in my mind. Unsolved murders are unfinished stories. The scenes of the crimes may change over the years; highways are built over them, buildings are torn down, houses are sold. I drive by and wonder if the new occupants, as they go about their daily lives, ever sense what happened there. Do they know, or am I the only one who still remembers?"

This is the opening paragraph of the book "The Corpse Had a Familiar Face: Covering Miami, America's Hottest Beat" by Pulitzer Prize-winning police reporter Edna Buchanan. It is a must-read for every police reporter. It is dripping with blood and pathos, throbbing with passion and compassion. It is funny, tragic, surreal. It is about people. And great journalism, too.

Buchanan says: "The police beat is about people and what makes them tick, what turns them into heroes or homicidal maniacs, what brings out the best in them, what drives them berserk. It has it all: greed, sex, violence, comedy and tragedy. You learn more about people than you would on any other newspaper job. The police reporter has a finger on the pulse of the community and is the first to know. Many of the biggest front-page stories in the nation originate on the police beat."

Buchanan would have been a great cop except that she writes so well. I bring up Buchanan because of the Nida Blanca case that has every ingredient of a true-to-life murder mystery and because it has brought out the red in the faces of police investigators. You know what I mean. Buchanan would have loved this. So would Lou Grant, the journalist, and Dr. Quincy, the medical examiner, characters in two hit TV series some decades ago that my generation loved. Now, except for Jessica Fletcher who writes murder, we only have cops and lawyers.

I mention these because the INQUIRER will be coming out with a little report on the state of criminal investigation in the country and the place of forensic medicine in this process. I spoke with a number of specialists in forensic medicine, mostly pathologists, to get their views on the state of crime investigation. The landscape, as most see it, is bleak.

There is a rise in criminality and in the number of unsolved crimes. There is also a rise in ignorance and stupidity in the handling of these cases. Maybe this is the time for concerned citizens, lawmakers, law enforcers and government officials—all these characters—to take notice.

One book that could help a lot is the newly published "Forensic Medicine: Facts the Public Must Know" by Teresita R. Sanchez, a doctor and lawyer and head of the forensic medicine department of UST. She was the founding president of the Philippine Association of Forensic Medicine.

The book is easy to read. As the title suggests, it is for the public, you and me.

First, Sanchez makes a fine distinction between legal medicine and forensic medicine. The former has to do with medicine in relation to substantive law and legal institutions. Forensic medicine "deals with investigation, preparation, preservation and presentation of evidence and medical opinion in courts and other legal correctional and other law-enforcement settings." It encompasses a variety of fields like pathology, anthropology, odontology, toxicology, entomology and even enters the realm of history, ecology and socio-political issues.

Sanchez also explains what medicolegal practitioners are. They could either be in government service or private practice, that is, as consultants in hospitals where medicolegal cases are referred.

Cases considered medicolegal in nature are described in the book: from unidentified persons who are dead or injured to child abuse, domestic violence and sudden death. There are quite a number of them. But this must be stressed: under our laws, medicolegal deaths must undergo autopsy, whether the next of kin want it or not. Otherwise the death certificate will state the cause of death as "undetermined" and that is as good as no death certificate. Legally, a body cannot be buried without a stated cause of death.

Did we know all these?

Sanchez's book deals with various subjects—from DNA testing, organ donation to rape to trauma wounds—but the most basic, which citizens and law enforcers ought to know by heart, is the subject in the first chapter which is on "Crime Scene Investigation." We think we know a lot about this because of the cops-and-robbers TV fare we've watched, but there's a lot more we ought to know. Ordinary citizens and victims' relatives, who are usually the first on the scene, should know what to do and what not to do.

Remember how that cop Biong burned the bloodied linen taken from the scene of the Vizconde murders? Or how grieving relatives embrace and cradle their bloodied dead? Or how Gen. Prospero Olivas presented to the media the gun supposedly used by Rolando Galman to kill Ninoy Aquino shortly after the assassination? Or how Aquino's body was tossed into a van? Classics.

Sanchez offers step-by-step instructions on what the scene of the crime officers (Soco) police team should do. Ideally, there should be a doctor in the team to determine whether the victim is dead or alive. If alive, the victim should be stabilized and rushed to the nearest emergency center. But even while doing this, the team must be careful not to destroy traces of evidence.

But because ours is a nation of *usiseros*, it is very likely that crime scenes are quickly overrun by do-gooders, looters, grievers, ignorant *barangay tanods* as well as the merely curious. The Soco arrives late because of heavy traffic and finds a less than pristine area, if not a messed-up place, littered with everybody's hair and dried spit.

Learn something new. Read the book of Sanchez, doctor, lawyer, woman.

Blood donor

YOUNGBLOOD

Marlon Bustillo Calaguas

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

IT was Thursday morning, July 19, 2001. I was busy doing some household chores when I heard the familiar sound of a tricycle stopping in front of our wooden gate. I went out to see who was there.

It was Kuya Alvinson, the third oldest among my siblings. He said he was going around looking for blood donors. He just dropped by to ask whether I knew some people who would be willing to donate their blood. The blood would be for his wife's uncle who had been seriously wounded after being shot by a still unidentified gunman. The patient was safe but he needed blood.

For me, my bother's search was the answer to my prayer. A couple of months earlier, I made a vow to perform an act of charity before I started a new chapter of my life. I turned 20 on July 16, and I thought about donating blood to make my birthday meaningful. And here was my chance to help someone in need.

I told Kuya Alvinson that I wanted to be a donor. But I also told him that I had one problem: I was scared to do it.

He immediately told me about his experience. He also had donated blood. He said there was nothing to be afraid of. He served as my orientation officer, telling me how it was done.

After he explained everything, I felt at ease. And looking at his physical condition convinced me even more that there was really nothing to it.

So, the deal was sealed. I told him I was going ahead an donating my blood.

That same afternoon, we went to the hospital. Actually, I had mixed feelings while we are on our way there. I felt nervous, excited and happy. I felt nervous because I imagined the needles, the blood and the odor of medicines inside the hospital. I felt excited because it was the first time I donated blood. And I felt happy because I was finally going to fulfill my vow.

As soon as we reached the hospital, my brother and I went to the room where blood donations were being taken. He went inside forward to talk to the hospital staff and asked for the doctor. A few minutes later, he was back and signaling me to come in. I immediately followed him.

Now I was actually inside the room. I was given a form to fill up. It was actually a questionnaire about my medical history and my current health condition.

After I answered all the questions, the intern took my blood pressure. She also took my weight, examined my eyes and skin, checked my pulse rate and put a stethoscope on my chest and on my back.

Apparently satisfied with the result, she brought the questionnaire that I had filled up to the officer-in-charge.

We waited for a while. And when the intern came back, she told me we could proceed. She took a sample of my blood for screening, and told me to come back the next day for the results.

Kuya Alvinson and I went upstairs to meet the patient and his relatives.

At 8:30 the following day, Kuya Alvinson fetched me. Then we picked up two more potential donors before proceeding to the hospital.

I was happy to be told that everything was alright, and I was qualified to be a blood donor. The next step was the real thing.

I tried to lie in the hospital bed as comfortably as I could, like I was told. But still I felt a little nervous and apprehensive. The cool air blowing coming from the air-conditioning unit made my hands and feet even colder.

The medical technology intern had difficulty finding my vein, and he had to call the doctor for help. The rubber band was wrapped around my left arm and then my right as they searched for the vein. It took the doctor several minutes to find it.

She told me to relax. I did some deep inhalation and exhalation. And then we were ready.

I closed my eyes and covered them with my bare hands. I prayed and asked God to give me courage. I told him that what I was doing was for His glory and that it was my way of saying thank you for all the blessing He had given me during the past 20 years: two decades of the gift of life, love and hope.

I was still praying mentally, when the doctor suddenly announced, "*Hayan, tapos na* (There, it's done)."

I immediately removed my hand and quickly opened my eyes. "I made it!" I almost shouted in triumph.

I didn't feel much pain. It was not as painful as I thought it would be. I just saw my blood flowing into a plastic bag. I was given a gadget for a soft massage and I was told to press it and release it slowly in my hand. After several minutes, the intern put the packed blood on a scale, until it registered 450cc. A short while later, the doctor removed the needle.

The doctor told me to remain in bed and rest for about 10 to 15 minutes. She warned me that if I didn't follow her instructions and sat up too soon, I would feel dizzy.

I did as directed. I chatted with the interns who were inside the room as well as with my brother and his two friends.

At one point the intern assured me, "*Okay lang 'yan. Makakatulong ng kapwa.*" He went on to say in jest that when a man donates blood, "*nakakagandang lalaki.*" Well, I felt like I was two years younger after I donated blood.

When I was fully rested and my brother's buddies were through with their physical examination, we left and went up to the patient's room. Earlier, I told him not to accept any money from the patient's relatives. But I saw someone slip some money into my brother's hand.

As soon we were out of the room I asked for an explanation. Kuya Alvinson assured me the money was simply for *merienda*. The patient's sister had insisted that he take us out for snacks at a nearby fastfood outlet. And that was where we were going..

I left the hospital with a smile in my heart. I felt my spirits soaring and my body being recharged. It was indeed a remarkable day and I think I will remember it for the rest of my life.

Marlon Bustillo Calaguas, 20, is a B.S. Elementary Education student but plans to shift to either nursing or foreign service.

THEY SAID

Fighting at the Sandiganbayan

"The last thing we want is for the Sandiganbayan justices to be fighting each other and adding to the perceived ineptness of the anti-graft court system."

—Akabayan Rep. Loretta Rosales, urging Justices Francis Garchitorena and Anacleto Badoy to settle their differences

Justices' duty

"We call on them to make their decision not on the basis of loyalty to those who appointed them but on the basis of what is right and just and fair."

—Plunder Watch convenor Dr. Carol Araullo urging Supreme Court justices not to be swayed by inducements from ex-President Joseph Estrada's camp

Constant service

"If you are a public servant, you serve on a day-to-day basis."

—Philippine National Police Chief Leandro Mendoza

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Terrorism in our midst

LETTERS

ABU SAYYAF. Osama Bin Laden. Taliban. The mention of their names elicit the fiercest reactions from many of us and provokes us into saying the vilest of cuss words. Like a pliant chorus, we have chanted, almost in unison, for a condemnation of terrorism and unstinting support for military efforts to crush its agents.

But closer to us than the horror of the World Trade Center bombing—and, for Metro Manilans, closer even than the kidnappings and bombings in Mindanao—are the acts of terrorism that haunt us, sometimes daily, in our communities, in our own neighborhoods, even in our own homes.

Look at the face of the child that materializes by your vehicle's window as it stops for a traffic light. Peer into the utter despair etched in the eyes a woman-child sleeping in public parks or any available sidewalk, with a grimy infant huddled beside her in a cocoon of old newspapers. Look at the depression that envelopes a family breadwinner who has just been told that he had been laid off. He cannot even imagine the life that awaits his family now. How can he feed his children? Where will they sleep?

Gaze at the blank stare of an abused child whose days are no longer meaningful because he has no bright future to look forward to. All rationality in her life has been banished by the beastly act of a man ironically ordained by God and by law to nurture, guide, support and protect her.

Look at the bruised, bowed head of a woman, beaten to submission by the very man who had vowed to love and cherish her for the rest of her life.

Catch, if you can, the furtive glances of a businessman who fears each day he and his family step out of the house. He feels like they're ducks in a shooting gallery, the targets of people who have made a lucrative living out of kidnapping for ransom.

There are so many terrors in our midst, many of them much closer to home.

But where is the resounding outcry? Where is the concerted action? Or, are we expecting victims to fight their own battles?

Why are there not enough hands and heads banding together to denounce and fight acts of terrorism like these? Is it too much to expect more from a government that quickly rushes to aid the Great White Hope in its anti-terrorism strategy, but thinks so little about fighting terrorism in her own country?

As the dust and rubble settle at Ground Zero and as the Taliban slip out of Afghanistan, we will realize that terrorism has not been decimated. It is still there. It grows unabated in our midst. Yet we are moving elsewhere.—**SALVADOR M. ENRIQUEZ JR., chair, Center for Democratic Development Concerns (CDDC), Pasig City, Metro Manila**

Neda on Leyte-Cebu power transmission cables

VIC Agustin commented on the decision of the National Economic and Development Authority Board to rebid the Leyte-Cebu Uprating Project of the National Power Corp. (Napocor) in his column on Nov. 7. He concluded that "...Sumitomo...won the May 2000 bidding, submitting a bid P150 million lower than what the Norwegian Alcatel offered to build the crucial facility."

He further commented in his column on Nov. 20 that "...with Edsa II...the new Neda...chose to ignore the Napocor staff recommendation and proceeded to uphold the recommendation...for a new bidding based on the original three-cable configuration."

We wish to correct his impressions. Agustin reached his conclusion based on incomplete information. The decision of the Neda Board to rebid, following the recommendation of the Investment Coordination Committee (ICC) and the Napocor Board as reorganized under the new electric power reform law, can be appreciated by considering additional facts about the project.

The Leyte-Cebu project is a transmission line project to be funded by a soft loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB). As presented by the Napocor to the ICC, the project is a three-cable transmission line that will enable Cebu to access electric power generated in Leyte. The Napocor argued that a third cable was necessary to ensure against a possible breakdown of any of the two cables and to avoid disruption in power supply. The ICC approved in 1997 the three-cable project, which the Neda Board affirmed on Dec. 18, 1997.

In May 2000, the Napocor conducted bidding for the project. However, instead of three cables as was approved, the Napocor bid out the project in two separate packages: (1) two cables and (2) an option to build a third. In doing so, the Napocor deviated from the approved project specifications without seeking the concurrence of the ICC and the Neda Board, in violation of existing rules and procedures.

Based on the submitted bids, Alcatel offered a lower price for both packages compared to that of Sumitomo, as shown in Table A below.

Table A. Bid prices "As read"

	For 2 cables	Third Cable	Total
Alcatel	2,070,657,426	454,640,612	2,525,298,038
Sumitomo	2,269,838,497	528,763,945	2,798,602,443
Lower Bid	2,070,657,426	454,640,612	2,525,298,308
(Alcatel)			

*Table B. Bid prices as adjusted**

	For 2 cables	Third Cable	Total
Alcatel	2,289,293112	476,692,842	2,765,985,954
Sumitomo	2,287,725,980	528,763,945	2,816,489,925
Lower Bid	2,287,725,980	476,692,842	2,765,985,954
	Sumitomo	Alcatel	Alcatel

** Adjusted by NPC*

Neda learned much later that the Napocor had required all bidders to sign a waiver for deviations in specifications. This means that the winning bidder would have to comply with the bidding/technical requirements and specifications of the Napocor for the price quoted in its offer. Notwithstandiing the waiver signed by the bidders, the Napocor adjusted the prices, as shown below.

In comparing Tables A and B., one would notice a significant difference between the bids "as read" and "as adjusted." However, using the results of the adjusted bids, the Napocor decided to award the project to Sumitomo.

The Napocor Board was reorganized following the enactment of the power sector reform law. On July 18, 2001, the new Napocor Board requested the ICC to review the consistency of the project as bid out vis-à-vis the original configuration approved by the government. The ICC, noted the deviation from the approved three-cable project. It also noted that Sumitomo's adjusted bid price was higher than that of Alcatel if the offer for the three-cable project were considered. (See Table B)

On Aug. 24, 2001, the Napocor reconfirmed to the ICC its intention to pursue the three-cable project. In this regard, the ICC and the new Napocor Board agreed to rebid the Leyte-Cebu project, a recommendation that was affirmed by the Neda Board in its meeting on Sept. 11, 2001.

Please note that then acting Director General Raphael P. Lotilla's letter of May 4, 2001 to Alcatel was a response to a query raised on whether the "bid price as corrected" was in accordance with ADB guidelines, and the answer was in the affirmative. However, at the time Lotilla issued the letter, Neda was not made aware of the waiver to deviations in specifications that was required of all bidders by the Napocor. Please also note that Lotilla's letter was not an opinion on whether the two cable with an optional third was the same as a three-cable specification. Neither should it be construed as Neda's "concurrence on the validity of the Napocor bidding" as stated in the Nov. 20 column of Agustin.

The decision to rebid had to do with the non-disclosure by the Napocor to the ICC and Neda Board of deviations in project specifications. The Napocor's warnings of costly delays could have been averted by the Napocor itself had it fully disclosed all relevant information necessary for the speedy implementation of the project.—**DANTE B. CANLAS, secretary, National Economic and Development Authority, Neda sa Pasig, 12 Blessed Josemaria Escriva Drive, Ortigas Center, Pasig City**

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Asian Spirit
THE PEOPLE'S AIRLINE

Lacson exposé intended to distract public attention

THIS refers to your editorial last Nov. 16, 2001 titled, "Smoke bombs."

I agree with your analysis of the recent exposé of Sen. Panfilo Lacson on the floor of the Senate. I believe Lacson was trying to use the exposé as a mere leverage on account of several criminal charges he is facing. These criminal charges are not ordinary crimes but heinous ones. Worse, these were committed when he was the chief of the Philippine National Police.

Everyone still remembers the Kuratong Baleleng case against Lacson which is now pending in court. The "bombs" he is exploding on the floor of the Senate are just a ploy to distract the attention of the Filipino people from the crimes he has committed.—**BONN CYRUS B. BACUYAG, 170 Prudencio St., Sta. Mesa, Manila**

Public health and drug patents

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

"WE agree that the TRIPS Agreement does not and should not prevent Members from taking measures to protect public health."

That one line may yet provide the key to more affordable medicines in countries like the Philippines. It appears in a declaration issued at the conclusion of a World Trade Organization (WTO) ministerial conference held earlier this month in Doha, Qatar.

TRIPS refers to the WTO's Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights. To become a member of the WTO, a country must agree to respect these "intellectual property rights," which includes payment of royalties to inventors, writers, musicians.

All that sounds reasonable; after all, someone should be compensated for innovation. Drug companies, in particular, have been the most vocal defenders of patents, arguing that they have to recover the investments they put in for research and development. Under the present system, when a drug company registers a new drug in a country that recognizes patents (that includes the Philippines), it will have exclusive rights to produce and sell that drug for 20 years. Unfortunately, because of this exclusivity, many companies end up dictating the prices of their medicines.

There have been debates surrounding these intellectual property rights, mainly on what would be reasonable in terms of returns on investment and on profits. The United States government has tended to be quite dogmatic about these patents. Last year, it threatened several countries with sanctions because those countries were looking into alternatives for procuring medicines for HIV/AIDS.

Most of the antiretrovirals (drugs that slow down the reproduction of HIV) are fairly new and are very expensive. Typically, the antiretrovirals would cost about $10,000 a year in the United States, and about P350,000 ($7,000) in the Philippines.

Not all countries recognize the same patent system that the United States and the Philippines have, which means drug companies in some countries are able to produce the new drugs. The Brazilian government, facing a serious AIDS epidemic, was aware of this and decided to look for alternative sources of antiretrovirals. They were able to find suppliers that could provide the antiretrovirals at a cost of about $1,000 a year. Not only that, a large Indian drug manufacturer, Cipla, announced last year that they could provide the drugs for $350 a year.

When Cipla, a very reputable drug manufacturer, says they can provide the antiretrovirals at $350 a year, it means they are already making a profit on that cost, which makes you wonder how much is being made on the $7,000 cost for the same drugs in the Philippines.

Similar questions cropped up recently when the US government itself needed to order a patented drug, ciprofloxacin, for anthrax. When they asked Bayer to give a quote for producing 100 million tablets, the drug company said it would cost $1.77 each. The American government asked around and found some drug manufacturers that could provide the drug at a lower cost. Eventually, with some haggling, Bayer brought down its cost to 95 cents each, with more discounts for future orders. (I discussed this in a column a few weeks ago.)

Consumer groups were quick to capitalize on the US government's flip-flop with patents. If they were so ready to go around the patent system for its own citizens, why couldn't they respect the developing countries' needs to lower the cost of medicines? What happens when people remain untreated for highly infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, which is the case for the Philippines?

At the Doha meeting, several developing countries, backed by international non-government organizations such as Médecins sans Frontières, Oxfam and Health Action International, lobbied for more flexibility with intellectual property rights. The result was the Doha declaration on the TRIPS agreement and public health.

The document starts out by acknowledging "the gravity of the public health problems afflicting many developing and least-developed countries, especially those resulting from HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other epidemics." The ministers also acknowledge that intellectual property protection "is important for the development of new medicines" but recognize "its effects on prices."

The document offers several alternatives to enable countries to respond to their public problems. One is the use of compulsory licensing. In this case, a government can declare a national emergency because of an epidemic and will require a drug company to license the government or other drug companies in the country to start producing a patented drug, at lower cost. Under compulsory licensing, the government still has to pay fees to the drug companies, but the drug ends up cheaper.

The Philippines has a law allowing this compulsory licensing for pharmaceuticals. Unfortunately, it was issued by the dictator Marcos and used to his advantage. He assigned exclusive rights for the production of the antibiotic ampicillin to a crony company. Because Marcos only shifted the monopoly away from multinationals to his own crony company, it did not result in cheaper ampicillin.

In Estrada's time, and now under Macapagal, the Department of Trade and Industry and the Department of Health have resorted to parallel imports. In this case, they import drugs from other countries' subsidiaries of multinational companies. It's really a matter of "shopping around" for the same product but in different countries, and importing the drugs from cheaper sources. The government started this with a small selection of drugs and were themselves shocked to find the large differences in costs. The multinational drug companies weren't too happy and sued the government.

The Doha declaration now opens the way for the Philippine government to go full steam ahead. Right now, the government is using parallel imports only for six drugs, which are sold only in a few government hospitals. With Doha's declaration on public health, it's time the government expanded the importations and made more medicines affordable for Filipinos.

* * *

Comments to miguel@pinoykasi.net

Values education across the curriculum

THIS refers to a letter to the editor published last Nov. 2.

The new interactive curriculum being worked on by the Department of Education strengthens values education because its teaching will be integrated across the curriculum. This means that the reinforcement of good values will be taken up in all subjects instead of being relegated to only one. We believe that all teachers must be able to impart the teaching of values.

The focus on five basic learning areas seeks to improve the quality of education by increasing the contact time between teachers and students. The fifth, which may be called "Makabayan," seeks to inculcate patriotism and good citizenship as a broad goal.

The Biology textbook of Diwa Learning Systems is not among the approved textbooks for procurement and distribution to the public schools. The errors contained in it must be corrected by the publishers. The private schools using the textbook must be aware of these errors and act on it.

Education Secretary Raul S. Roco earlier ordered the review of textbooks used in public schools so that errors are spotted and corrected before further orders are made. Transparency in bidding procedures has brought down the cost of textbooks from a high of P80 per textbook to a low of P25. Reforms in distribution are also underway.—**HILDA C. VILLADOLID, director III, chief of staff, Department of Education, DECS Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City**

The WORLD

LUVERNE B. GUECO, EDITOR

US bombs Taliban leaders' compound

KABUL—The Taliban said Wednesday that their supreme leader was safe after F-16 jets and B-1B bombers attacked a compound in southern Afghanistan that the Pentagon said was being used by senior leaders of the Taliban and terrorist groups.

With US planes in the air, Marines patrolled the desert, reinforcements landed at their desert base and American operatives worked with ethnic Pashtun tribes to bring the war to the Taliban's last bastion, the area around their spiritual base of Kandahar in the south.

That area appeared to be falling into chaos. Refugees looted aid warehouses and police checkpoints stood empty. Taliban forces in Kandahar and members of Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida terrorist network reportedly were preparing to evacuate.

"All soldiers and officials have been ordered to be prepared to leave Kandahar at any moment," the South Asian Dispatch Agency quoted an unidentified Taliban deputy commander in Kandahar as saying. Western journalists aren't allowed into Kandahar, so its report could not be independently verified.

Army Gen. Tommy Franks, the US commander running the war, also said Tuesday he had evidence that al-Qaida fighters were looking for ways out of Kandahar.

Warlord Rashid Dostum, touring the carnage left by a three-day battle in his sprawling, mud-walled fortress in northern Afghanistan by captured al-Qaida fighters, said the uprising was all but quelled.

"Two dangerous people are still there," he said, wandering through a body-filled courtyard in a flowing brown robe and a black leather jacket. "Maybe some are lying among corpses. They are suicidal people and one can expect anything from them."

Rumsfeld said the Pentagon ordered the air strikes Tuesday against a compound near Kandahar after learning that it was being used by senior leaders of the Taliban, al-Qaida and Wafa, a Saudi humanitarian group that was among several groups named by the United States as aiding Bin Laden and his network.

US F-16 jets and B-1B bombers attacked two targets with precision-guided weapons, military officials said.

Pentagon officials didn't say who may have been in the compound and possibly killed, though Rumsfeld told reporters "It clearly was a leadership area" and said those targeted were "nontrivial."

"Whoever was there is going to wish they weren't," he said.

Neither top Taliban leader Mullah Mohammed Omar nor any other high-ranking Taliban officials were in the compound when it was bombed, Abdul Salam Zaeef, the bespectacled former ambassador to Pakistan known for delivering the Taliban's message to the world, told the Afghan Islamic Press on Wednesday.

He told the Pakistan-based news agency that the air strikes targeted the house of a local Taliban leader in Kandahar's Dand area and not an al-Qaida base. He gave no details of casualties.

"Mullah Mohammed Omar . . . is safe and sound. He hasn't been hurt, nor any other Taliban leader," Zaeef told AIP. The agency's report couldn't be independently confirmed.

Of an estimated 4,000 to 5,000 al-Qaida members in Afghanistan, several hundred have been killed, including seven considered to be leaders, US officials in Washington said on condition of anonymity.

Franks described the situation inside Kandahar, the dusty backwater city were the Taliban was organized in the early 1990s, as "very confused"—an observation born out by reports from residents and travelers reaching Pakistan.

Kandahar residents, reached by telephone, said Taliban fighters were positioning anti-aircraft guns and mortars on hilltops surrounding the city. But the center of the city appeared largely deserted. Remaining Taliban fighters seemed demoralized and increasingly fearful of US attack, the residents said on condition they not be named.

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Experts worry Bin Laden may have ultimate weapon

LONDON—While there is no proof Osama bin Laden has nuclear weapons, a wide range of international analysts say he has been trying to acquire them for years and may have succeeded, or be close.

Even experts who think Bin Laden's al-Qaida network does not have an atomic bomb say it's best to assume it does and prepare for its possible use.

The scale and sophistication of the terror attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, for which Bin Laden is the main suspect, mean nothing can ever again be ruled out, no matter how nightmarish, they say.

"The Sept. 11 attacks certainly take us a lot closer to a nuclear possibility," said Paul Wilkinson, an expert on terrorism at St. Andrews University in Scotland.

Fanatical terrorists "might resort to this kind of mass destruction weapon and we have to take that seriously," he said.

US Army Gen. Tommy Franks, commander of US military operations against the Taliban and al-Qaida, said Tuesday that US officials had identified more than 40 sites in Afghanistan where Bin Laden's network may have been researching nuclear, chemical or biological weapons.

He said the sites were still being tested for evidence that any weapon of mass destruction had actually been produced.

Many experts fear Bin Laden has a "dirty bomb" or could quickly construct one. Not capable of producing a nuclear explosion, a dirty bomb would use conventional explosives to spread radioactive material over a wide area and make it uninhabitable. It could be made from easily acquired low-grade nuclear material, such as isotopes for medicine and industry.

"The problems in finding materials for a dirty bomb practically do not exist," said Dmitry Kovchegin of the Center for Policy Studies in Moscow.

Bin Laden has boasted of having weapons of mass destruction. The US and other Western governments say there is no evidence he has a nuclear weapon, but officials acknowledge it can't be ruled out.

"Inevitably, it will happen eventually," said Dr. Frank Barnaby, a nuclear physicist who specializes in nuclear terrorism studies at the Oxford Research Group, a private think tank in Oxford, England.

Analysts who doubt Bin Laden has a nuclear bomb don't think al-Qaida has the skill to develop such weapons. Plans for an atomic bomb found in Kabul, reported recently by the British press, appear to have been an old spoof from a humor journal that al-Qaida may have mistaken for genuine diagrams.

AP

Newsman killed in Taloqan

TALOQAN, Afghanistan—A Swedish television journalist was killed early Tuesday in an armed robbery in northern Afghanistan. Separately, a Canadian freelance reporter was detained in Taliban-held territory, editors of the newspaper he writes for said.

Ulf Stroemberg, a cameraman for Sweden's TV4, was the eighth journalist to die in Afghanistan since the start of the US-led military campaign on Oct. 7.

Two young masked men armed with Kalashnikov rifles broke into the house in Taloqan where a group of Swedish journalists was staying and took cameras, computers, a satellite telephone and money from journalists working for the newspaper Aftonbladet, the paper reported.

They then moved to the next room where Stroemberg was staying and, awoke Stroemberg with a knock on the door, said Rolf Porseryd, the reporter who was sharing his room.

"As soon as he opened the door, there was a bang. Ulf fell over me. 'I'm hit, I'm shot," Porseryd said in a telephone interview with the broadcaster.

Porseryd said he and the Aftonbladet journalists tried to revive Stroemberg and rushed him to a hospital, where a doctor pronounced him dead.

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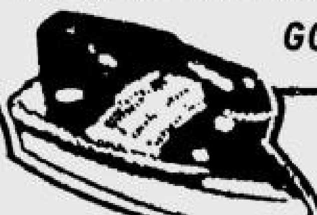

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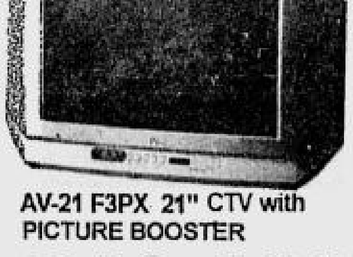

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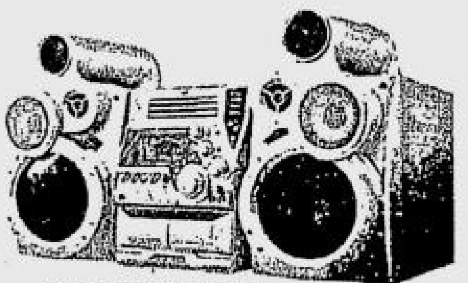

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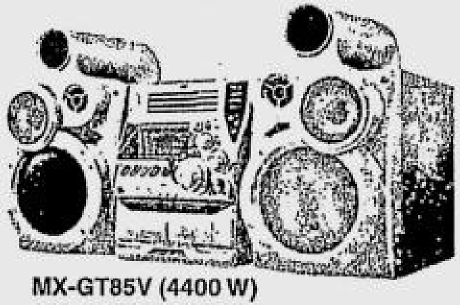

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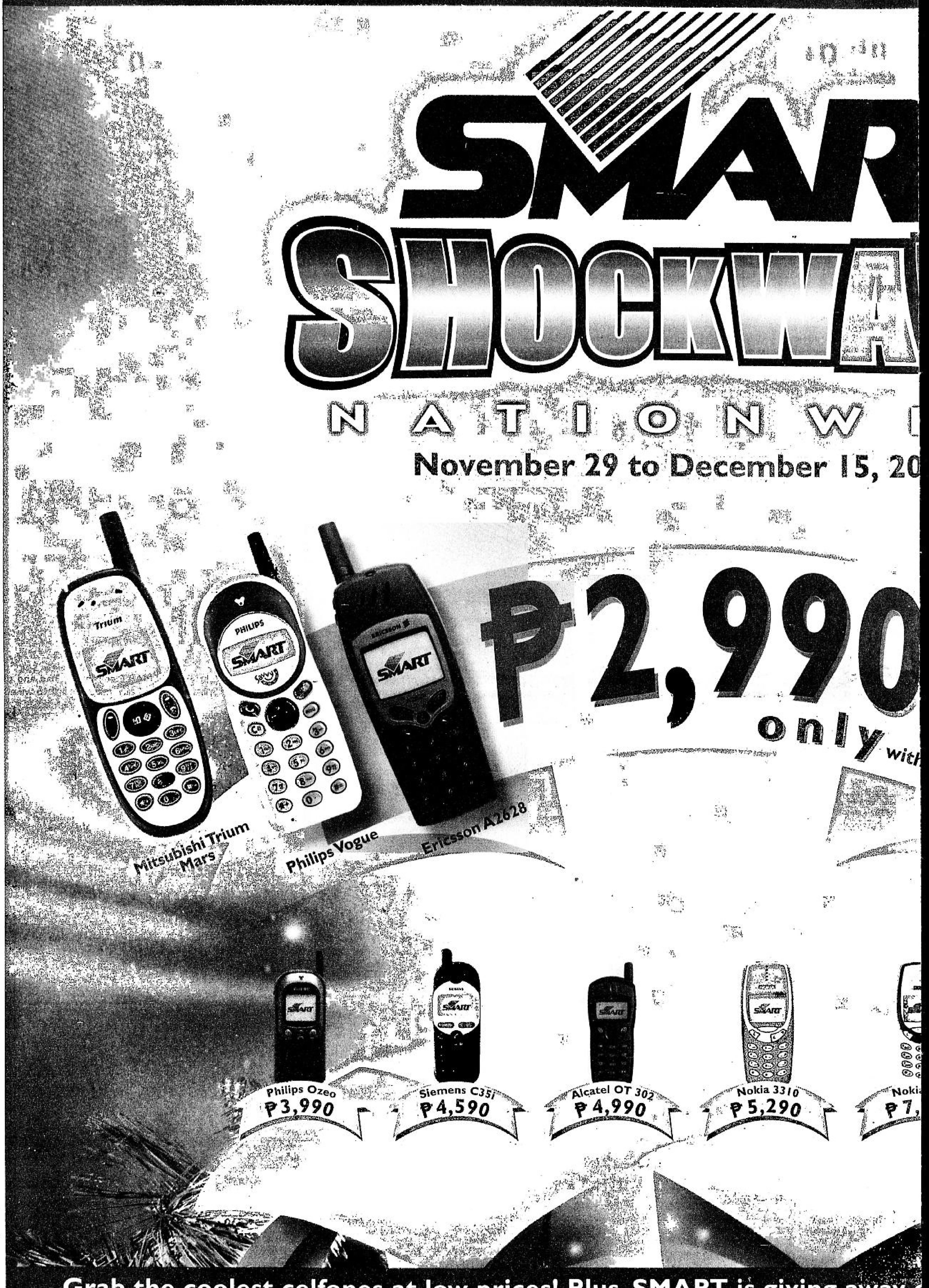Get Ready For Amazing, Earth-Shaking Treats This Chr

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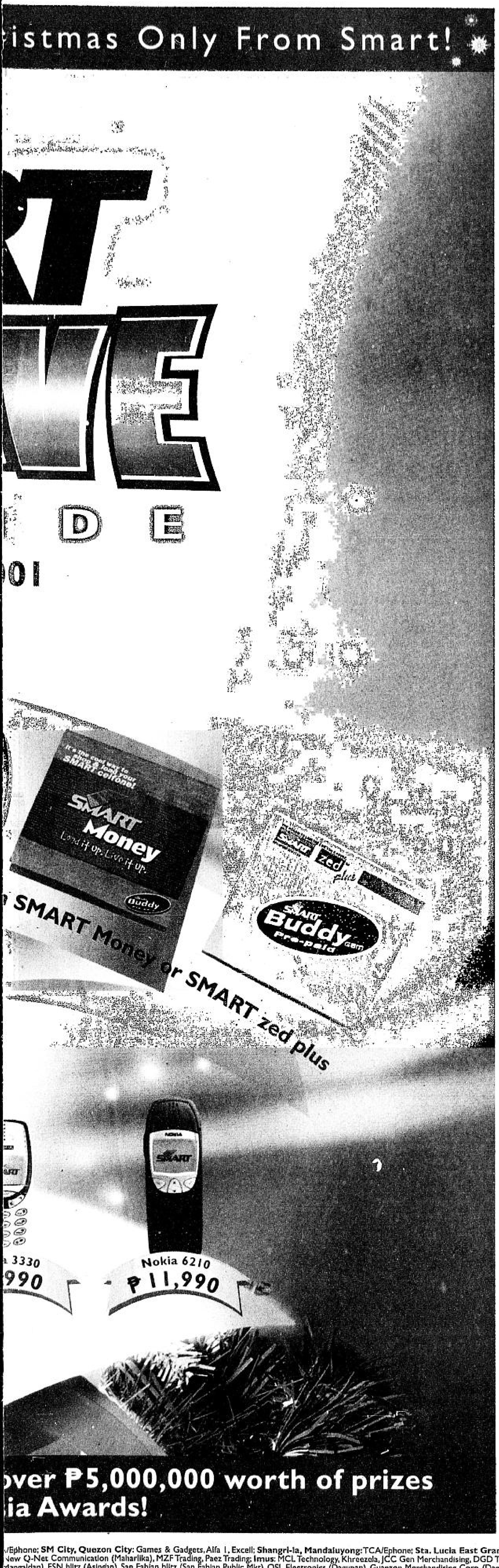

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Viet Nat'l Assembly approves historic trade pact with US

HANOI, Vietnam—Vietnam's National Assembly on Wednesday ratified a landmark trade agreement with the United States, the last step in a decades-long process of normalization of ties between the former wartime enemies.

Under the deal, Vietnamese goods and services will gain access to the world's largest market with the same low tariffs enjoyed by most nations. In return, Communist Vietnam must open its state-controlled markets to foreign competition and international standards.

The pact symbolizes Vietnam's efforts to integrate into the world economy, said economist Do Duc Dinh of the Institute of World Economy in Hanoi.

"I think this sends a clear and strong signal of Vietnam's willingness to join the international community," he said.

The pact, approved 278-85 by the National Assembly with 17 abstentions, was signed by the two sides in July 2000 after years of difficult negotiations. It was ratified by the US Congress and signed by President George W. Bush in October.

"There is a huge sigh of relief that US-Vietnam relations will be normalized," said Susan Adams, chief representative of the International Monetary Fund in Vietnam. "After the war, and all the deep feelings, we've finally buried the hatchet and moved on."

The United States and Vietnam had no formal relations and limited contact in the two decades following the end of the Vietnam War in 1975. The trade deal completes the reconciliation process begun with the lifting of a US trade embargo in 1994 under then President Bill Clinton.

Vietnamese President Tran Duc Luong is expected to sign the document next week. Once the two countries exchange diplomatic notes in early December, an official start date for the agreement's implementation will be decided. That could come as early as Jan. 1.

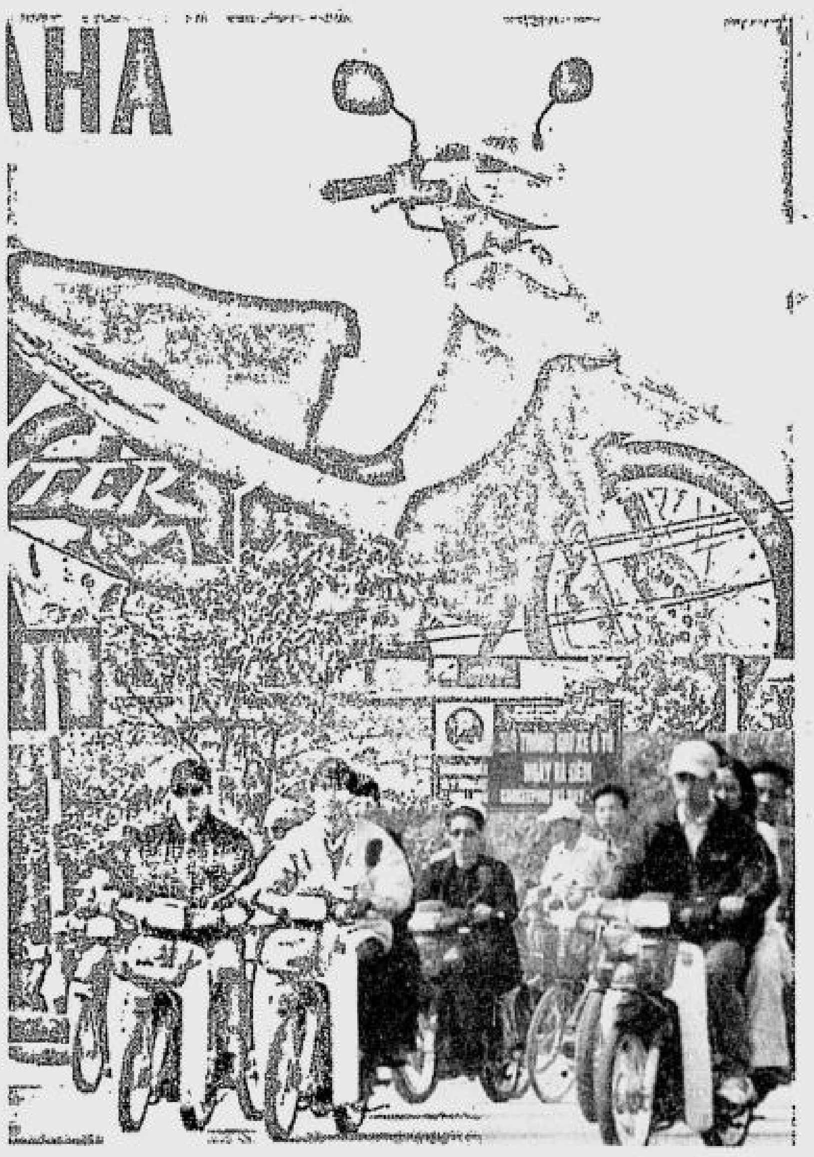
The ramifications for Vietnam are far-reaching. The pact requires that trade barriers be lowered, state industries compete with foreign companies, and copyright and investment guarantees be raised to international levels.

In a concession to Hanoi's fears that American companies will overwhelm domestic industries, US companies will initially have restricted access to Vietnam's banking, insurance, telecommunications, tourism and technical services markets. That will be slowly lifted over a seven-year period.

US tariffs on Vietnamese-made products will drop from as high as 40 percent to about 4 percent.

That is expected to give an immediate boost to Vietnamese exporters of garments and textiles, footwear, and seafood. The World Bank has estimated that Vietnam's exports to the United States could double from the current $800 million a year. The worldwide economic slowdown has cut into those expectations, but Vietnam is still expected to see a rise of 20 percent to 30 percent.

For American businesses already in Vietnam, lowered tariffs could provide an incentive to manufacture more. *AP*



MOTORCYCLISTS ride past a huge advertising poster on a street of Hanoi as Vietnamese lawmakers debate a landmark trade deal with the United States. AP

Indon police announce Tommy Suharto's arrest

JAKARTA—Police in the Indonesian capital said Wednesday they have arrested Tommy Suharto, the fugitive son of the former president, after a yearlong manhunt.

"Yes, it is true. He was captured in Bintaro (a southern suburb)," Jakarta police spokespersonn, Senior Commissioner Anton Bahrul Alam, told SCTV television in a telephone interview.

The head of the Jakarta police rapid response unit, Senior Commissioner Said Aqil, said Tommy was captured at about 5 p.m. and was being taken to the Jakarta police headquarters.

Tommy's lawyer, Nudirman Munir, said he had heard the news but had not yet been informed by police of the arrest.

"As far as we know, he surrendered and was not captured," said another lawyer for Tommy, Elsa Syarief.

But Alam said Tommy was arrested. "He did not surrender."

At the city's police headquarters, some 50 policemen lined a passage from the gate to the building in preparation for Tommy's arrival.

Present were the national police chief, Gen. Saroyo Bimantoro, and the Jakarta police chief, Inspector General Sofyan Jacub.

Hutomo (Tommy) Mandala Putra has been a fugitive since he failed to turn himself in on Nov. 3 last year to serve an 18-month jail sentence for corruption.

On Oct. 1 this year, in a highly controversial decision, the Supreme Court quashed the corruption conviction after his lawyers demanded a review of the case.

But police say he is wanted for allegedly ordering the murder in July of the judge who originally sent him to jail.

Syafiuddin Kartasasmita was killed in a drive-by shooting on his way to work.

Police also accused Tommy of a role in bombings in Jakarta in recent years after mounting raids in July on two Jakarta residences allegedly used by him. They said caches of weapons and explosives were found.

Tommy, 38, is Suharto's youngest son and a former millionaire playboy.

Police conducted numerous raids and searched Suharto family homes during their hunt for Tommy, even dropping "wanted" posters from a helicopter at one point.

Since the elder Suharto stepped down in May 1998 his family has come under scrutiny for the fortunes they acquired during his 32-year rule.

The former general-turned-president is himself charged with embezzling $571 million of state funds but court officials say he is unfit to face trial following a stroke. *AFP*

US envoys continue efforts for ceasefire

JERUSALEM—Violence punctuated the first day of a US effort to stop 14 months of Palestinian-Israeli fighting, when three Israelis and three Palestinian gunmen died in two incidents.

Two Israelis were killed and 14 wounded on Tuesday in Afula, near the line between Israel and the West Bank. Two Palestinians armed with automatic rifles ran through the center of town, firing in all directions, before police cornered them and shot them dead.

In the Gaza Strip, a Palestinian attacked an Israeli convoy, killing a woman and wounding three other people, including a baby, the military said. Israeli soldiers fired back, killing the gunman, the military and Palestinian security officials said.

An Israeli Army spokesperson said the attacker had fired at the convoy and thrown grenades. In a faxed message to The Associated Press, the militant group Hamas took responsibility.

The Palestinian Cabinet issued a statement condemning the two attacks "and all operations targeting Israeli civilians."

Two top-level US mediators saw the aftermath of the attack in Afula. Assistant Secretary of State William Burns and envoy Anthony Zinni were in an Israeli military helicopter on a tour of the West Bank, narrated by Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

Informed of the attack, Sharon directed the helicopter over Afula, where the envoys saw police dealing with the aftermath of the gunfire assault.

Later, Zinni said the incident showed that "a ceasefire is what we need to get to something more comprehensive and lasting." *AP*

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, November 29, 2001
34th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: **Dn 6:12-28**
Gospel: **Lk 21:20-28**

Jesus said to his disciples. "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then you must know that the time has come when it will be reduced to a wasteland. Then, if you are in Judea, flee to the mountains; if you are in the city, leave it; and let those who are in the fields not return to the city.

For these will be the days of its punishment and all that was announced in the Scripture will be fulfilled. How hard will it be for pregnant women and for mothers with babies at the breast! For a great calamity will come upon the land, and divine justice upon this people. They will be put to death by the sword or taken as slaves to other nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled upon by the pagans until the time of the pagans is fulfilled.

Then there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth anguish of perplexed nations when they hear the roaring of the sea and its waves. People will faint with fear at the mere thought of what is to come upon the world, for the forces of the universe will be shaken. And at this time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

The signs of the times

Now, when you see the first events, stand erect and lift up your heads, for your deliverance is drawing near."

Commentary

History recorded the fall of Jerusalem. It was in 70 AD when the Romans destroyed it. Jerusalem was the center of biblical religion. In this story, God allows its end. The end of Jerusalem is not just an ordinary event in history. It has a faith-meaning. Of course, the end of Jerusalem means that the Jewish religion is finished. The Jewish temple is destroyed. It's tragic. That is why, the end of Jerusalem is terribly linked to the Second Coming. God has now chosen new and better ways of coming to us. He is not tied to any place. Now he is present in us in the Holy Spirit of Jesus dwelling in us and in the Church.

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

CRIMINAL LAW (AGGRAVATING CIRCUMSTANCES)—Evident premeditation—The element of evident premeditation is manifested by the planning and preparation undertaken by the offender prior to the commission of the crime. It is not presumed from the mere lapse of time nor can it be deduced from sheer speculation. An intangible matter, evident premeditation is exhibited from these circumstances—(1) the time when the offender has appeared determined to commit the crime; (2) the act evidently indicating that the offender has clung to his determination; (3) sufficient lapse of time between the determination to commit the crime and the execution thereof during which the offender could have reflected upon the consequences of his act. While the previously issued threats against the life of his victim may roughly be said to indicate premeditation, absent any other evidence disclosing the true criminal state of mind of the accused, threats of this variety are regarded by courts as casual remarks naturally emanating from a feeling of rancor and not a resolution of the character involved in evident premeditation. The killing of the victim deviates from the natural workings of the criminal mind which usually abhors detection and the possibility of retaliation. Instead of ensuring that his authorship of the crime would remain unknown, accused-appellant appears to have chosen to stab the victim in broad daylight, in an accessible neighborhood corner and in the presence of a number of other persons who could easily identify him. Needless to say, these facts do not bear the earmarks of a carefully planned murder. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Vitug, Third Division, People v. Flores, G.R. No. 138841, April 4, 2001]

DIGEST BY R.B. VERA

Taiwan cracks down on vote-buying

TAICHUNG, Taiwan—Politicians used to toast Shen Chang-chieh with Japanese whiskey and stuff him with sushi, steak and crab at election time, hoping he would help them round up votes in his neighborhood.

Now, even with a crucial legislative election on Saturday, Shen says he has little to do but sit at home drinking tea.

This is a sign that Taiwan's new government may keep its pledge to crack down on rampant vote-buying and run a clean election.

Hundreds of prosecutors and police have been fanning out islandwide, and more than 40 people have been indicted.

"There's just no money coming down this year," said Shen, a local political boss who runs a gem- and stone-carving business out of his home in the central city of Taichung.

If the corruption busters succeed, they could encourage reforms in the world's most populous nation: China. A clean election could show Taiwan's toughest critics—China's communist leaders—that a healthy democratic system can work in an ethnic Chinese society.

Most Taiwanese trace their roots to China, just 160 km across the Taiwan Strait.

When urged to follow Taiwan's shift from authoritarianism to democracy in the past 10 years, Chinese leaders have scoffed at the political reforms, saying the Taiwanese have only created a phony democracy in which gangsters and crooked politicians buy their way to power.

One of the Taiwanese investigators' biggest targets are neighborhood leaders like Shen, called "tiau-a-ka," or "pillars," in the Taiwanese dialect. Good "tiau-a-ka" know how to cajole—or buy—votes from neighbors, so it's important to keep the local political bosses well-fed.

But it's tough to come up with the cash amid a crackdown and a recession that is cutting into candidates' resources.

Shen said his job involved knocking on doors at the area's three-story cement homes and slipping residents envelopes containing about 300 Taiwan dollars ($10). As election day nears, the vote buying intensifies.

Although the former ruling Nationalist Party denies it, many say vote-buying was key to the party's decades-long control of Taiwan's presidency and legislature.

Chuang Chao-mu, who said he had been part of the Nationalist Party's vote-buying machine for 20 years, recalled passing out bags of the cooking flavor enhancer MSG in the 1970s, when Taiwan was a poor agricultural society.

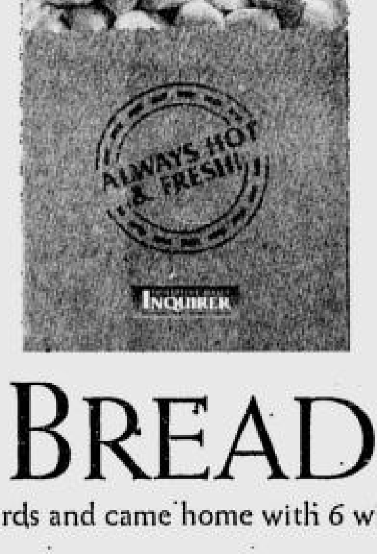
He said that as a manufacturing economy developed and the middle class grew, the inducements also were enlarged—from soap and red envelopes containing 30 or 40 Taiwan dollars (about $1) to expensive banquets and even vacation tours.

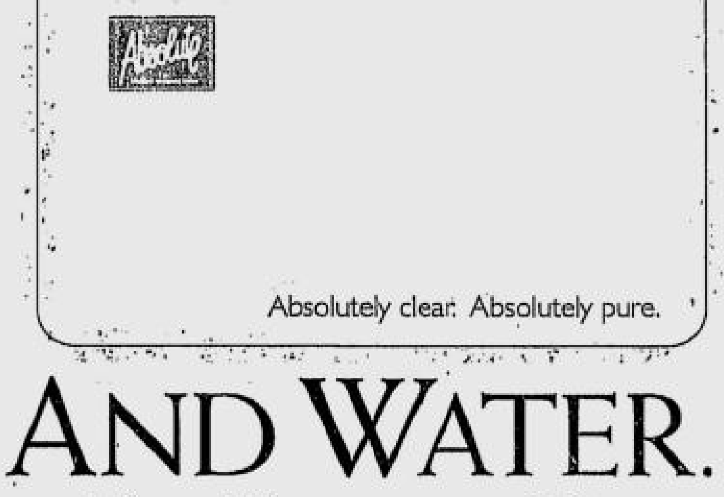
"Vote-buying was always a type of political investment," Chuang said. "But this gave way to other corrupt practices when officials were in office."

Taiwan's often-large voting districts encourage vote-buying. With several seats up for grabs and more than one candidate running from the same party, candidates with similar philosophies must win over voters with their personalities—or cash.

When President Chen Shui-bian's Democratic Progressive Party came to power last year, it pledged to end money politics. Leading the crusade is Justice Minister Chen Ding-nan, an attorney and former shoe salesman nicknamed "Mr. Clean."

Chen has established a limit of 30 Taiwan dollars (about $1) for gifts such as T-shirts or baseball hats. He also enlisted the help of over 700 prosecutors and the island's entire police force—pressed into duty for the first time against election fraud. *AP*

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E-mail: inq_baguio@inquirer.com.ph

Southern Luzon Bureau
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Legazpi City
Tel. No . (052) 820-8402
Fax No. (052) 820-1274
E-mail: inq_bicol@inquirer.com.ph

Across the NATION

TONY BERGONIA, Assistant Editor

Visayas Bureau
c/o Cebu Daily News
18-15 Escario St., Cebu City
Tel. Nos. (032) 233-0346/233-0349
Fax No. (032) 232-9938
E-mail: pdivis@skyinet.net

Mindanao Bureau
FEP Printing Corp. Bldg.
Ma-a Road, Davao City
Tel. Nos. (082) 244-1770 to 71
Fax no. (082) 2441771
E-mail: pdiminda@dv.weblinq.com

GMA candidate leading in ARMM, says Namfrel

COTABATO CITY—Nur Misuari's "traitor," Dr. Parouk Hussin, appears to be headed to become the next governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

Early figures from the National Movement for Free Elections in the ARMM showed that Hussin was leading independent candidate Ebrahim Paglas III by a wide margin.

As of 5 p.m. yesterday, the poll watchdog said it already tallied 1,987 out of the 6,511 election returns from Sulu, Maguindanao, Tawi-Tawi, Lanao del Sur and Basilan.

Fr. Eliseo Mercado, Namfrel-ARMM chair said Hussin was leading with 168,009 votes while Paglas has 64,276 votes cast in his favor.

For the vice gubernatorial race, Mahid Mutilan got 164,549 votes while Ben Loong registered 60,770 votes.

But Mercado said the Namfrel was maintaining its stand about the need for the Comelec to stop its canvassing until it has investigated fraud committed during Monday's elections.

Hussin winning

Poll officials in the region declined to release initial figures of the canvassing but they agreed that Hussin was winning.

In Maguindanao, provincial election supervisor Lintang Bedol declined a request from the INQUIRER to release the results of balloting in Shariff Aguak, Parang and Barira towns.

"But the administration is ahead," Bedol said.

In Lanao del Sur, Commissioner Resurrection Borra also predicted a landslide victory for the administration lineup.

The provincial board of canvassers in the province has finished tallying the returns from at least 12 towns but Borra said the Comelec would not release the results yet.

Newsmen covering the canvassing, including the INQUIRER, could also not get results from the tally board, because military men were preventing them from entering the area where the canvassing was being held.

Certain of win

Eduardo Ermita, presidential adviser on the peace process, said Malacañang was sure that Hussin would be the next ARMM governor.

Ermita said the administration was sure that 70 percent of the votes cast on Monday for the gubernatorial post were in Hussin's favor.

"The estimate as of noon (Tuesday) was that in Maguindanao, it's almost 70-30 ratio; in Lanao del Sur 75-25; in Tawi Tawi, it is 70-30, in Basilan it's 75-25 and in Sulu, 65-35, all in favor of Hussin," Ermita said.

Fraud

But Paglas said Malacañang was sure of victory because of massive cheating in favor of its candidates.

"They were sure he would win because they cheated in the first place," Paglas said.

He cited several instances when Namfrel discovered evidence of cheating and fraud during the conduct of the elections.

Among these were the discovery of pre-filled ballots in Datu Odin Sinsuat and Datu Piang in Maguindanao, in Sulu and in Pualas and Lumbatan towns in Lanao del Sur.

"The result of the election would clearly show that the government was serious in dictating its will to the people of the ARMM," he said. *Edwin O. Fernandez, Butch D. Enerio and Grace C. Albasin with reports from Allan A. Nawal, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

HUSSIN all smiles after casting his vote in Jolo. VAL HANDUMON

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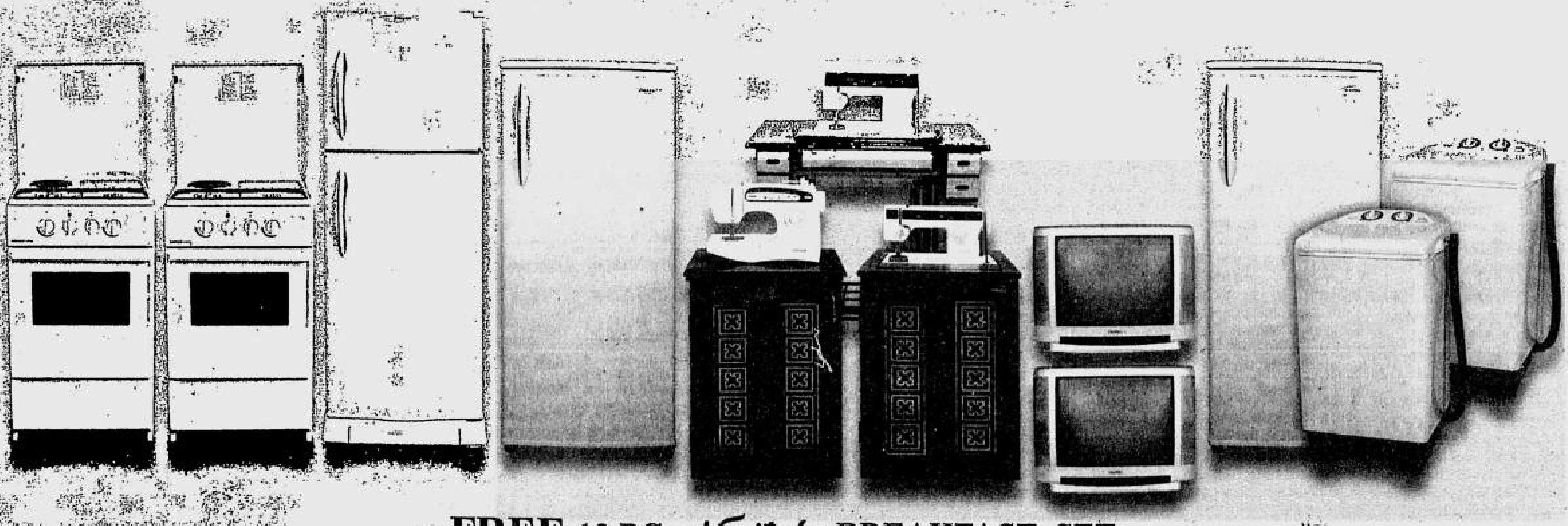

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Visayas and Northeastern Mindanao will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms becoming widespread rains over Southeastern Visayas. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Hi 32° Lo 20°
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Hi 21° Lo 12°
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Hi 30° Lo 20°
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Hi 31° Lo 17°
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Hi 30° Lo 19°
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Hi 29° Lo 17°
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Hi 30° Lo 24°
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Hi 30° Lo 21°
Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 30° Lo 23°
Roxas	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 30° Lo 24°
Cebu	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 30° Lo 25°
Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 29° Lo 24°
Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 32° Lo 23°
Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 32° Lo 24°
Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy	Hi 29° Lo 23°
Davao	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 29° Lo 24°

Compiled by: Ray Leyesa, PDI Research/11/29/01

Tower puts phone firm in trouble

By Ma. Diosa Labiste
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—The City Council has recommended the filing of charges against telecommunications giant Smart Communications Inc. for constructing a cell site tower without permits.

The council adopted the report of the four committees that sought the filing of criminal charges against Smart for defying orders to stop work on the tower and for violating provisions of the National Building Code.

In a report to the City Council, the committees also asked Mayor Jerry Treñas to tell Smart to transfer its tower from Barangay Our Lady of Fatima Jaro to a place "far from the population and where it has social acceptability."

The committee report was unanimously passed as a resolution on Nov. 21. It was submitted to Treñas for action.

In August, the Colegio de San Jose and the barangay councils of Luna, Our Lady of Fatima and San Vicente filed a complaint before the city government protesting the construction of Smart's base station and transmitter along N. Jayme Street.

They said the steel tower poses danger to those living near it especially during typhoons. The residents also expressed concern over the health hazards that exposure to radiation emitted by the tower could bring them.

Barangay residents complained that the construction of the tower started in July even before the city government approved it. They said diggings were made without the required permit.

City officials said the telecommunications giant showed "disrespect to authorities and members of the community" because the residents and the school officials were not consulted.

During the public hearing, Alvin Fernandez, the Manila-based manager of Smart Communications Inc. network services division, admitted that his company failed to secure the requirements.

These included the building and construction permit from the office of the city mayor; certification from the city council's committee on environmental protection, clearances from the city zoning office and the Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) from the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office.

Fernandez said his company failed to inform and consult the residents regarding the project.

The city government issued separate orders in July and in August for Smart to stop the construction. But residents said the construction continued despite the orders.

Smart allayed fears that operations of the cell site can cause cancer or other ailments.

In a position paper, the company said recent scientific studies showed no conclusive evidence that the operations of wireless telecommunication systems were hazardous.

But the report of the committees on transportation, communication and utilities, health, public works and environmental protection said the fears of the residents should be given credence.

Councilor Erwin Plagata said there is no evidence to prove or disprove the risks to health posed by telecommunications towers.

"But we (councilors) stand on the safe side of the issue. We don't know if there is any safe distance between people and cell sites but they should not be built in populated areas," said Plagata.

The report also recommended that Treñas advise the Department of Environment and Natural Resources not to issue an ECC to Smart. An ECC is a set of conditions that provides for measures to counter whatever harm the project may cause on the environment.

The Community Environment and Natural Resources Office certified the tower's site as an "environmentally critical area" because it is flood-prone. The Cenro had recommended that Smart secure an ECC from Manila.

Cargo ship loaded with 1,443 bags of cement sinks

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—A cargo vessel loaded with more than 1,000 bags of cement sank in the waters off Antique yesterday after it was battered by strong waves.

No one was reported hurt as passenger ship MV Sta. Ana rescued the 15 crewmen and two passengers of LCT North Star.

The Coast Guard identified the rescued crew as skipper Benedicto Toledano and crew members Eddie Cayabo, Allan Fesalbo, Rodrigo Borja, Elisiano Latagan, Emiliano Palma, Edgar Geon, Elmo Altiga, I. Sherwyn Lawanta, J. Carlito Calonse, Jolly Gerianan, Mauricio Ibañez, Allan Abuca, Jessie Aguilar, Ferdinand Faa. The passengers were Henry Gedorio and Welmer Halaba.

MV Sta. Ana was expected to arrive in the port of Iloilo City at 5:30 p.m. yesterday.

Lt. Daniel Gayosa, operations officer of the Coast Guard in Western Visayas, said the rescued crew and passengers would be temporarily housed in the Coast Guard Station in Iloilo City.

Gayosa said LCT North Star was bound for Roxas City, Capiz when it sank about 30 nautical miles south of Naso Point in Anini-y town, Antique, between Antique province and Sipalay City in Negros Occidental.

The 495-ton vessel owned by Manila-based North Bay Transport Corp. came from Iligan City. It was carrying 1,443 bags of cement.

Gayosa said the crew of North Star sent out a distress signal about 3 a.m. yesterday after the vessel tilted sharply to its right side.

Authorities said huge waves destabilized the vessel's cargo.

Toledano immediately ordered his crew to abandon ship after water reached the ship's engines.

An unidentified ship in the Indian Ocean picked up the distress signal. The Coast Guard sent out an alert after it received the report around 5 a.m.

Passenger ship MV Sta. Ana was within the vicinity when it received the alarm from the Coast Guard about the LCT North Star.

The passenger ship immediately changed its course to rescue the cargo ship's crew and passengers, said Gayosa.

MV Sta. Ana, of the Negros Navigation, was carrying 306 passengers bound for Iloilo City from Iligan City.

Execs launch campaign to counter port critics

By Alex V. Pal
PDI Visayas Bureau

DUMAGUETE CITY—The Philippine Ports Authority has launched a propaganda campaign to counter protests against its plan to reclaim 1.3 hectares of beach along Rizal Boulevard for the construction of a fastcraft terminal.

The PPA has reproduced 3,000 leaflets that contained the port plan and a warning at the back to "beware of environmentalists' scare."

The leaflet also warned the public of "the extremist and fanatical activism" of critics, who, it claimed, "invent and twist issues and argue theories against the reclamation project as if the matter borders a life and death struggle for the constituents of Dumaguete City."

Engineer Raul Merecido, PPA manager-port services division, said they decided to come out with leaflets because based on their assessment, the public is either misinformed or lack information about the project.

"So that is the first of a series of flyers that we are about to release. We are working on the second batch," he told the INQUIRER Tuesday.

Merecido said they had sent out 3,000 leaflets for the first batch, which cost at least P2,000 that was charged to the PPA's budget for publication.

Members of the Citizens Alliance for Responsible Development (CARD), a multisectoral group opposing the PPA plan, said the arguments raised in the PPA leaflets were nothing new.

"These are nothing but a repetition of the same issues which had already been torn to pieces by the scientists who had been studying these things for more than half their lives," said Roy Olsen de Leon, a biology professor.

The fastferry terminal and the reclamation projects at the port area are part of the PPA's Port Development Plan, which was ready for implementation in 1997.

But these were opposed by environmentalist groups, saying the reclamation project would badly affect the city's famous landmark, the 800-meter-long Rizal Boulevard that faces the sea.

The project would also destroy corals, which support the subsistence of fishermen living on the shoreline of Dumaguete, the groups said.

In their leaflets, the PPA said the P130 million project is aimed at developing "an antiquated and obsolete port facility."

The proposed terminal, it said, will have a facility dedicated to bring safety and convenience to passengers.

The design presented by the PPA is composed of a berthing space for fastcrafts, a passenger terminal building, and a parking area for vehicles, among other features.

SELLING CHRISTMAS

The season when people spend most and expect to earn more has come. A boy displays Santa Claus dolls for sale on Session Road in Baguio where Christmas is felt most because of the cold. TOOTS SOBERANO

NPA rebels release soldier

BISLIG, Surigao del Sur—After three days in captivity, Cpl. Alex Nuvillo of the 62nd Infantry Battalion was freed by the Ka Bob Ruiz Command of the New People's Army in Brgy. San Roque here.

Nuvillo, who was "captured" when rebels ambushed their team in a remote village of Hinatuan town on Nov. 24 was handed to personnel of the International Committee for the Red Cross.

The NPA's Northern Mindanao Command said the release was part of their goodwill gesture for the resumption of the peace talks between them and the government in December.

Ka Digma Makabayan, commander of the Ka Bob Ruiz Command said they were hoping the government would also release political prisoners held in various jails nationwide.

Makabayan also said the ambush that left two soldiers dead on Nov. 24 was not meant to target the military but the guards of the Paper Industries Corp. of the Philippines (Picop) for atrocities allegedly committed by the company.

"What they have done was already too much. Not only have they retrenched hundreds of workers but they also demolished houses, uprooted trees planted by farmers and destroyed farmlands within their concession areas," Makabayan said.

He said the NPA, after burning two dump trucks owned by the company on Nov. 24, was expecting Picop guards to run after them and laid an ambush plan.

"Instead (soldiers) from the 62nd Brigade came in," Makabayan said.

He recalled that they were sent to sitio Bingcongan from their detachment in barangay Bigaan also in Hinatuan to provide reinforcement to Picop guards, who were thought to be running after the NPA rebels.

But instead of finding Picop guards in the area, Nuvillo said they were met by gunfire from the NPA.

"I did not surrender without a fight. When I saw that two of my comrades were already wounded, I tried to help them but it was difficult because I was carrying my machine gun," he recounted.

Nuvillo said he decided to surrender when the NPA commander told his men to throw a hand grenade at their position.

For three days, he said, the rebels transferred him from one place to another to elude pursuing soldiers.

"But they treated me well," Nuvillo said *Ma. Kristina Cassion, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Boy's pa cries for help

By Santi Alcantara

SEAN Joel Crispino of Sta. Cruz, Virac, Catanduanes, may be a picture of perfect health just like any normal 2-year-old boy.

But not all is well with Sean, his father Joel said.

Results of medical examination conducted at the Philippine General Hospital, where Sean undergoes monthly checkup, shows that Sean has cyanosis, a condition which gives sufferers a dark blue or purple skin color due to the lack of oxygen in the body.

This is caused by a congenital (inborn) defect in the heart.

A heart examination revealed that he has a single atrium and a single ventricle.

In a letter addressed to the INQUIRER, Crispino said that when Sean was 6 months old, he would experience "episodes of fainting," followed by difficulty in breathing as a result of exertion.

Crispino said two weeks before Sean was diagnosed with the disease, he had "high fever accompanied with cough and colds."

The doctor said it would cost Crispino and his wife, both jobless, P80,000 for the first of a series of operations on Sean.

Crispino used to work as a security guard. He was laid off due to massive retrenchment.

"I could even hardly provide for... my wife and my son for his monthly checkup at the PGH," Crispino's letter said.

"We are soliciting the help of the INQUIRER and other kind-hearted souls for financial support for our son," Crispino said.

He said future operations would be more complex and costlier. But he is leaving it all to prayer power.

Donations can be coursed through Fr. Nestor "Butch" Buena of the Immaculate Conception Seminary, Diocese of Virac, Virac, Catanduanes or to Fr. Buena's savings account No. 0000000584049960 at PCI-Equitable Bank.

SEAN in a recent photograph.
PHOTO COURTESY OF FR. BUENA

ROUNDUP

Amnesty for 800 ex-rebels

TUGUEGARAO CITY—Some 800 rebel returnees from Cagayan Valley received amnesty certificates, land titles and cash from Silvestre Bello III, chair of the National Program of Unification and Development Unit. Bello said the returnees can put up a cooperative by using their money and parcels of land from the government. In Nueva Vizcaya, 102 former rebels from Ifugao, Nueva Vizcaya and Quirino also received P1,750 and P8,000 each in emergency loans and capital. *Estanislao Caldez and Ben Moses Ebreo, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Elders vs mining

BAGUIO CITY—Eighty elders from Abra, Benguet, Mt. Province and Ilocos Sur are opposing the mining operation and expansion of the Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. During a conference last week, the elders said the mining operation submerged the farmlands of Cervantes and Quirino towns in Ilocos Sur because of siltation. Elders in Mankayan, Benguet, said toxic wastes from the firm's mining operation caused the death of the Mankayan-Cervantes River. *Desiree Caluza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Fire razes factory

BOCAUE, Bulacan—Grass fire razed a firecracker factory in Barangay Bunlo here on Tuesday. Supt. Christopher Montillano, police chief here, said the flames from tall cogon grass burned the skyrocket factory of Teresa Agustin at 4:30 a.m. He asked residents and firecracker owners whose factories are near rice fields to take extra precaution to avoid grass fires. *Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Rebels kill 2

LEGAZPI CITY—Suspected New People's Army rebels killed a 74-year-old woman and her 39-year-old daughter when they fired at the victims' house on Sunday, in Barangay Gangao, Baleno, Masbate. Police identified the victims as Justiniana Rapsing, 74, and her daughter Teresita, 39. A police report said residents saw five armed men encircle the house and fire at it simultaneously. The rebels were looking for the other members of the family, including Justiniana's husband. *Rey Nasol, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Tax hikes

NAGA CITY—The Naga City government is bent on raising the valuation of real estate property, a move that is expected to lead to higher taxes. Ramon Felipe Jr., convenor of the group Citizens' Action Versus Excessive Assessments and Taxes, however, said the plan to raise taxes is untimely as the financial crisis is hitting taxpayers hard. But Simeon Adan, council member and proponent of the new valuation scheme, explained that the increase in taxes is inevitable because the local government has not increased its real property tax rates for the past several years. *Juan Escandor Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Mayor eludes arrest

TIWI, Albay—A town mayor convicted of usurpation of authority has eluded arrest. Judge Samuel Buendia, Tiwi-Malinao Municipal Trial Circuit Court judge, issued an arrest warrant on orders of the Supreme Court, which upheld an earlier decision of the lower court. Buendia earlier sentenced Malinao town mayor Salvador Moll to a minimum of one-year imprisonment. He said if Moll does not surrender, he will be considered a fugitive. *Job Belen, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Not a lot of bull for this carabao beauty contest

By Anselmo Roque
PDI Central Luzon Desk

SCIENCE CITY OF MUÑOZ—A parade of carabaos, the country's "beasts of burden," will be staged here to choose the most beautiful of the herd.

Organizers like to call the contests for the selection of the best animals as the search for "Miss Carabao," "Mr. Carabao" and "Mrs. Carabao."

The animals will be judged not on the basis of physical appearance alone but for other qualities. There will be prizes, not for the carabaos, but for their owners.

"While there is fun for these contests, the bottom line is to select and present to the public what a quality carabao should be," said Dr. Libertado Cruz, executive director of the Philippine Carabao Center (PCC) here.

The contests will be held on Dec. 5 at the PCC National Gene Pool and Headquarters at the Central Luzon State University compound here.

There will be other contests and activities that will focus on the carabao and the PCC on that day, according to Cruz.

The activities are in line with the observance of the first charter anniversary of this city.

Mayor Nestor Alvarez said other member-agencies of the Muñoz science community would take part in other activities lined up for the celebration on Dec. 3-13.

Cruz said the "Miss Carabao" contest, whose chair is Dr. Rubina Cresencio, will require the "contestants" to be decorated.

The contestants, Cruz said, will "wear" Christmas attire. But of course, he said, the carabao must conform to standards of a "beautiful" carabao similar to the criteria set when the first "Miss Carabao" contest was held here seven years ago.

The first "Miss Carabao" pageant chose the best quality native carabaos that were included in the national gene pool and were used for the PCC's upgrading program. This time, what contest organizers will be looking for are the best purebred and crossbred carabaos.

The winner of the "Miss Carabao Contest" which is also dubbed as the "Best Decorated Carabao Contest," will receive P5,000; the second best, P3,000; and the third, P1,000.

The biggest prizes at stake are in the "Mr. Carabao" contest, which is actually a carabao race.

Dr. Apolinario Salazar Jr., chair of the contest, said the "contestants" will take part in a 300-meter cart race. There will be elimination rounds and the winners in each heat will vie for the top award.

The top four winners will receive P20,000, P15,000, P10,000 and P5,000.

In the "Mrs. Carabao" contest, judges will choose the best dairy buffalo. The winners will be judged visually and according to their dairy records, according to contest chair Eric Palacpac.

Visually, the contestants will be competing in terms of general appearance and body condition.

The top three winners will receive P5,000, P3,000 and P1,000.

For "non-carabao" contestants, a milk-drinking contest will be held. Gallons of fresh carabao milk will be used during the contest.

Cruz said the carabao deserves the most attention because of its huge contribution to the country, farmers and entrepreneurs.

"They should not be looked up only as the lowly beast of burden but its potentials as well for providing huge gains for the country," he said.

He said that if the carabao's contributions to the economy were quantified, it would reach at least P12.8 billion, representing meat, milk and draft power for agriculture.

He said the country now has thousands of improved breed of carabaos whose average weight is between 400 and 600 kilograms (females) and 700 and 800 kilograms (males). He said native carabaos only weigh an average of 350 kilograms.

Atong holds key to Erap's crimes, says Indian

(From page A1)

tion facility in America's gambling capital.

Lawyer Raymond Fortun, a member of Estrada's defense team, flew to the United States Tuesday night on board a Philippine Airlines flight.

Fortun told radio station dzMM that he would go to Las Vegas to confer with Ang's legal counsel. He denied that he would lawyer for Ang in the United States, saying he was not licensed to practice in the state of Nevada.

Ang was arrested on the basis of the Philippine government's request for his extradition. He is among Estrada's co-accused in the plunder charges filed at the Sandiganbayan.

Estrada's wife, Sen. Luisa Ejercito, yesterday confirmed that her family had dispatched Fortun to the United States to extend legal assistance to Ang.

Ejercito expressed certainty that Ang, a close friend of Estrada's who fled the country at the height of "People Power II," would not turn state witness in the plunder case being heard by the anti-graft court. "I am confident that (Ang) will not turn his back (on the former President)," she said.

But Senate President Protempore Manuel Villar believes that Ang will eventually rat on Estrada to save himself.

"There is a strong possibility (that Ang will turn state witness). He knows so much," said Villar who, as Speaker in the 11th Congress, played an instrumental role in the institution of impeachment charges against Estrada.

Increased risk

Devnani noted that the kidnappings of which Ang had knowledge, which occurred between 1995 and 1998, also involved "colonels and generals" in the Philippine National Police, and that the risk to Ang's life would increase at his extradition.

Earlier, Devnani appeared at the Senate blue ribbon, peace and order, and anti-drug committees to testify on Ang's alleged role as leader-turned-negotiator of the Kuratong Baleleng.

Ang was said to have used his security agency to identify possible kidnapping targets in the Chinese-Filipino and Indian communities.

Devnani said he was willing to face Ang and confront him with details of the alleged kidnappings.

"He should face all his victims in the Chinese-Filipino and Indian communities," Devnani said.

He called on the victims to come forward and tell all they knew of Ang, and on the Senate committees investigating accusations against Lacson to start hearings on the kidnapping issue.

Earlier this year, Devnani went public and said he managed the members-only Club 419 in San Juan on Estrada's behalf in 1996.

He said it was there that he listened to Ang and Kuratong Baleleng leader Renato Parohinog discuss the kidnapping operations of which, he said, Lacson was the "brains."

Other fugitives

The Philippine government is targeting next Yolanda Ricaforte, Estrada's alleged auditor for the protection money allegedly given him by "jueteng" lords.

Like Ang, Ricaforte fled the country and is believed to be in the United States. US agents have allegedly tracked her down in California.

"We are optimistic that Mrs. Ricaforte will also be arrested anytime now by the US government for purposes of extradition," Ombudsman Aniano Desierto said before yesterday's hearing at the Sandiganbayan.

Desierto also said the prosecution was very grateful to the US government for responding to the request for Ang's extradition, which he expected to be ordered a month after Feb. 28.

Reynaldo Wycoco, director of the National Bureau of Investigation, said the NBI would coordinate with law enforcement agencies in other countries to arrest Estrada's other cronies who fled after his ouster.

Wycoco cited businessman Jaime Dichaves, saying: "Hopefully, we can get Dichaves back (from the United States) because an arrest warrant has been issued against him."

The NBI director said the government was also setting its sights on Dante Tan. The businessman has fled to New Zealand, but that country does not have an extradition treaty with the Philippines.

Wycoco said the government would seek the help of the Interpol in bagging Tan, who is being blamed for the scam involving BW Resources.

Even if the Philippines does not have an extradition treaty with New Zealand, a "country-to-country coordination" is still possible, Wycoco said.

He named the others that the bureau was trying to have arrested as Cesar Mancao and Michael Ray Aquino, both officials of the defunct Presidential Anti-Organized Task Force.

The two men, Lacson's former lieutenants, are linked to the abduction and murder last year of publicist Salvador "Bubby" Dacer and his driver Emmanuel Corbito.

Dichaves

Justice Undersecretary Manuel A.J. Teehankee confirmed to reporters that the Sandiganbayan's third division had issued an arrest warrant on Dichaves.

"As regards Jaime Dichaves, we are pleased to report that the arrest order for (him) will also be made available," Teehankee said. "We are trying to obtain a certified copy for the purpose of preparing the papers for (his) extradition, if he is found in a foreign jurisdiction."

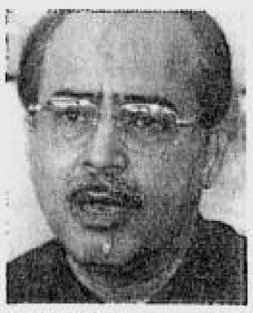
Dichaves was included in an amended complaint filed by Desierto on Sept. 21 with the Sandiganbayan for allegedly conspiring with Estrada to pressure the Social Security System and Government Service Insurance System to buy P1.8 billion worth of Belle Resources Corp. shares in 1999.

He was said to have "abetted, conspired with and prevailed upon" Estrada to force the GSIS and SSS to invest in Belle.

It was allegedly Dichaves who delivered to Estrada a P189.7-million profit-commission for supposedly facilitating the deal.

Desierto said Dichaves later deposited the money into the "Jose Velarde" account.

He also said Dichaves "fronted for Estrada in most of the illegal transactions by using the powers of the Office of the President." ***With reports from Rocky Nazareno, Norman Bordadora, Juliet L. Javellana, Philip C. Tubeza, Michael Lim Ubac and Jennie Ilustre***



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Moro rebels give up but keep firearms

(From page A1)

"I'm satisfied with the way (Assistant Interior) Secretary (Ibrahim) Iribani handled the situation. Now we can return to our normal lives again," Lobregat said.

Iribani received the two sets of hostages that included 35 women, 15 children and 60 men.

Thanks

The President expressed thanks to the crisis committee that she formed yesterday morning on the recommendation of Lt. Gen. Roy Cimatu, chief of the Armed Forces' Southern Command.

She had authorized the committee, composed of Zamboanga Rep. Celso Lobregat, chief government peace negotiator Jesus Dureza and Cimatu himself, to decide on how to deal with the hostage-takers, all followers of renegade ARMM Gov. Nur Misuari.

Iribani and acting ARMM Gov. Isnadji Alvarez also helped in the negotiations.

The President said Cimatu would decide on what to do next. "Well, we'll have to make sure that doesn't happen again," she said. "That's part of what General Cimatu has to plan, how to plan the tactical operations so it won't happen again."

Most of the ex-hostages interviewed by the INQUIRER claimed to have been treated well by the rebels. But they complained of lack of food to eat Tuesday night.

"The hands of all the men and three women were tied behind their backs," Maricel Espartero said.

She said the hostages who were made to sleep in separate quarters on that first night expressed their wish to go home but were held back by their captors.

The rebels had used Espartero for running errands, like buying P300 worth of diesel gasoline and P100 worth of quick-cook noodles, cigarettes and candies.

Casualties

Deputy Interior Secretary Alipio Fernandez Jr. said 10 MNLF fighters were killed in the fighting inside the Cabatangan complex.

Two others died in hospital while being treated by Red Cross personnel led by provincial coordinator Alan Cajucom.

On the government side, three soldiers of the 59th Infantry Battalion and two agents of the Military Intelligence Coordinating Office were killed.

Three civilians were also killed, and eight others were wounded.

Six wounded rebels were treated by a PNP medical officer identified only as Inspector Macario.

Mohammad Nur Natchai, ARMM secretary for budget and management, said the 217 rebels were not members of the MNLF breakaway forces but "organic members of the MNLF."

Ten MNLF members captured at the height of the fighting were turned over to Julhambrie Misuari and their firearms returned to them.

"These are just part of the agreement," Iribani told the INQUIRER. "It's one of their demands for the safe release of the hostages, and our primary concern since yesterday and this morning is to get all the hostages safely and end this crisis as soon as possible."

Natchai explained that the turnover of the 10 captured rebels and the return of their firearms indicated the "mutual trust and confidence between the MNLF and the Philippine government."

He also said the MNLF fighters had resorted to hostage-taking "to protect their lives against angry and determined members of the AFP."

"One of the agreements reached this morning is the government's assurance to provide livelihood projects to these MNLF fighters," Natchai added.

Claretian missionary Max Rodriguez, who was among the negotiators, appealed to Zamboangueños "to accept the agreement."

"Let's start anew for the good of all of us," Rodriguez said. "Let's take it from here. We hope this will not occur again here in Zamboanga. People are tired of war. Children and women are very traumatized."

'Only concern'

At a press briefing later in the day, the President's spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao brushed aside questions about the concessions given to the rebels.

He said "the only concern was for the release of the hostages."

The President also dismissed fears that Nur Misuari's followers would try to regroup with their former comrades in the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, which continued to fight for a separate Islamic state even after the MNLF made peace with the government in 1996.

She expressed confidence that the MILF would continue with the peace negotiations.

"Where is their future—having a peace process and working for development with our legitimate government, or what?" she said. "Or forging linkage with people whose leader ran away and you can't even find him because he turned incommunicado?"

This was why, she said, "I'm not afraid because our peace process with the MILF has been going very, very well."

The other night, Ms Macapagal said what happened in Zamboanga City was an isolated case that had "no potential of spreading and worsening."

She described the hostage-takers as "desperadoes and renegades" who were deserted by their leader.

She said what happened to them was the "responsibility of no less than Nur Misuari, who incited his men into this misadventure."

In the same speech she gave before the Foreign Buyers Association of the Philippines, the President also heaped praise on Cimatu.

"I have confidence in his judgment and decisions," she said, adding that her faith in him was a result of not only her own observation but also that of the US team "that came to observe our men fight in Mindanao."

Attacks

In Cotabato City, the military said Misuari's followers had hatched a plan to launch attacks following the Tuesday raid on the house of his nephew Sincer.

Maj. Julieto Ando, spokesperson of the 6th Infantry Division, said more unlicensed firearms owned by Misuari's armed followers had been confiscated and discovered in various safehouses in the city.

Citing intelligence reports, city police chief Supt. Sanggacala Dampac said Misuari's followers had plans to retaliate after Sincer's house was raided and his firearms confiscated.

"We have just prevented plans to do acts similar to what they did in Zamboanga City," Dampac said.

"They wanted to retaliate, they were mad," Ando said, citing Army intelligence reports.

Security has been beefed up inside the ARMM compound in Cotabato City, where the provincial canvassing in the recently concluded ARMM election is being held.

Six Simba vehicles with about 200 soldiers are serving as back-up force for a similar number of regional police who replaced the ARMM's security group.

Ando said Misuari's guest house inside the 10-hectare ARMM complex was found to have a tunnel.

He said this was what Sincer's men used when they noticed soldiers about to enter the guest house minutes after the hostage-taking in Zamboanga City.

The tunnel passes through a concrete fence of the ARMM compound and on to a dense populated district outside, Ando said. ***With reports from Edwin O. Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau; Gerald G. Lacuarta and Cynthia D. Balana in Manila***

Peace, Kiara's birthday wish

(From page A1)

of admissions of the Ateneo de Zamboanga University, who was freed later in the day.

Kiara, a second-grader at the Ateneo de Zamboanga, said her birthday wish was that "there will be no more violence in Zamboanga City."

She said the best gift she received was from the soldiers and the rebels "for allowing me to go home and spend my birthday together with my friends."

"But I think I'll just share my food with the other (hostages) there with the soldiers," she said.

Kiara and 29 other hostages walked for two hours from Fairview Subdivision to Rennit Drive in Pasonanca.

She described the experience as "very exciting—I felt that I was just exercising."

Kiara, who was still in her red pajamas and slippers when taken by the rebels, said she missed her morning milk and hotdogs.

According to Kiara's mother Melisa, the child did not know that they were being taken hostage by the rebels.

Melisa described the rebels as "quite friendly."

"They did not harm us," she said. "They promised that they would free us as soon as the demand was met. Now we are free."

OIC: Neither her nor there on Misuari case

(From page A1)

of 8 which is tasked with overseeing the insurgency problem in southern Philippines.

The Committee of 8 is composed of Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Senegal and Libya.

The group, chaired by the ambassador of Indonesia, is represented by its respective ambassadors to the Philippines.

"If you talk to the ambassadors individually, each will tell you that he supports the position of the Philippine government withdrawing its recognition of Misuari," the source said.

But the committee itself has not come up with a unified position "which should be relayed to the OIC at the ministerial level."

This committee position will then be taken up at conference level and a resolution must be passed to signify the OIC position on Misuari.

"This has not happened yet. We have not seen that resolution yet," the source said. "Strictly speaking, the official process has not taken place."

"But in the diplomatic circles, if you talk to the ambassadors representing the eight countries, they will all say they no longer recognize the leadership of Misuari," he said.

In a speech delivered Tuesday night before the Foreign Buyers Association of the Philippines, Ms Macapagal said Misuari would have to stay in Malaysia until after the "Malaysian government is done with the investigation."

Face the music

"And I encourage them to take all the time they want in dealing with Nur Misuari. Then whatever is left of him will be sent home to face our music," she said.

Ms Macapagal promised to make Misuari answer for the attack on Jolo on Nov. 19 that killed at least 113 people.

"We will mete out justice as we consolidate the new government of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM)," the President said.

She said she expected the incoming ARMM officials led by administration candidate Parouk Hussin, who is part of the 15-man MNLF executive committee, to "uphold clean and efficient government."

The President said the MNLF executive committee, which took over as MNLF chair from Misuari, are the government's "partners in the peace process and in upholding the law."

Ms Macapagal expressed confidence that her good relations with Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad and the OIC would counteract Misuari's request for political asylum.

She said she was sure Malaysia would resist overtures from OIC members "friendly" to Misuari to hand over the renegade ARMM governor to them "because of our good relations with Malaysia and our good relations with the OIC."

Malaysian Defense Minister Najib Tun Razak yesterday said that his country had ruled out allowing Misuari to leave for countries which may grant him asylum.

Malaysian officials said Misuari was being held as an illegal immigrant at a location being kept secret for security reasons.

Paying off

Ms Macapagal said her state visits to Malaysia last August and to Indonesia earlier this month were finally paying off.

"(When) things like this happen, we're only a phone call away," she said.

Vice President Teofisto Guingona Jr. said it was improbable for Malaysia to allow Misuari to leave the country without informing the Philippine government.

Guingona, also the foreign secretary, said the government would be lenient on Misuari, who faces rebellion charges, if he cooperated with authorities.

"If he promises to cooperate with the government in restoring the peace, we could give him some leniency. We need peace," Guingona said.

An official of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) said the Macapagal administration should better think twice before asking Malaysia to extradite Misuari.

Murad Ebrahim, MILF chief negotiator and head of the rebel group's military force, said Misuari's absence could help ease the tension in some parts of Mindanao.

"It is better if he stays in Malaysian jail. If he is extradited to the Philippines, tension will continue to build up and may explode into a situation harder to control," Ebrahim, speaking from Kuala Lumpur, said.

Loyal supporters

Murad said Misuari's presence in the Philippines could fuel anger among his loyal supporters.

"It is an admitted fact that he is still the acknowledged leader of a large number of MNLF forces. They cannot stand the sight of their leader languishing in jail," he said.

Ghadzali Jaafar, MILF political affairs chief, echoed Murad's view.

"For as long as he is away, the tension will be less," Jaafar said.

The two rebel leaders warned that dealing with Misuari's followers only through military means would be a big mistake.

Malaysian authorities holding Misuari are investigating whether he is connected to Muslim extremists linked to the al-Qaida terrorist group.

Police Inspector General Norian Mai was quoted by news media as saying that police would question Misuari about the abduction of three Malaysians from Pandanan Island in September 2000.

Earlier that year, Abu Sayyaf made global headlines by abducting 21 people, including Western tourists, from nearby Sipadan island. Most of the hostages were released after the payment of millions of dollars in ransom.

Abu Sayyaf has been linked to the al-Qaida organization of Osama bin Laden, prime suspect in the Sept. 11 terror attacks in the United States.

"Investigations are under way to determine the extent of Nur Misuari's links with the Abu Sayyaf group," Norian was quoted as saying in the New Straits Times newspaper. ***With reports from Allan A. Nawal, PDI Mindanao Bureau and AP***

GMA lectures mayors on action agenda

(From page A1)

assembly yesterday.

She lambasted their so-called "action agenda" which she said was no action agenda for their localities as it was like the national government's.

She complained that it did not outline specific programs of action to fight poverty and corruption, which she said the mayors should be concerned about.

Before she spoke, the LMP president, Mayor Ramon Guico Jr. of Binalonan, Pangasinan, made a great show of presenting the action agenda to the President.

He read to her their seven-page agenda, which, with pride, he proclaimed to be the product of their three-day general assembly held at the Manila Midtown Hotel.

When it was her turn to respond, Ms Macapagal did not waste time to give them a piece of her mind.

"I heard your action agenda. That's not an action agenda. That's the agenda of the national government. Is the mayors' action agenda. What I want to hear is the mayors' action agenda. What are you going to do for our country because you are the frontliners," she said in Filipino.

There was applause. Apparently, her words did not immediately sink in. Others who were quick to pick up the President's meaning hid their embarrassment in soft laughter.

Ms Macapagal said she expected the mayors to draw up a "specific" action plan to uplift the people's lives through housing, cheap medicines, infrastructure, and business opportunities.

She said the national government was doing its share.

"You can do something within the confines or boundaries of your municipalities. That should be the mayors' action agenda," she explained not quite patiently.

Based on the INQUIRER count, she digressed from her prepared speech at least six times to criticize the mayors' action agenda.

"In an action agenda, you stress what you are going to do, not what the national government needs to do. Otherwise, the national government should have joined your workshop."

"What I had hope for was what you are going to do like how to address Sona, how to reduce red tape, how to use your corporate powers, how to strengthen your devolved powers," she went on.

In their action agenda the mayors asked for, among other things, an increase in their share in the national taxes, in foreign assistance funds. They also asked for more regulatory powers over the police, jeepneys and buses, environmental permits, gambling, and public infrastructure projects.

They also asked the national government to delineate municipal waters.

In her speech, Ms Macapagal said she was doing away with the "*palakasan* (patronage)" system.

She said for this year she automatically released the Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA) for each municipality despite the "huge budget deficit" she inherited from her predecessor.

For 2002, she said she did away with the so-called "local government service equalization fund," which she said is the source of "palakasan."

Under the previous set-up, she said, municipalities gave up around 10 percent of their IRA for the equalization fund. So mayors who found themselves running out of funds had to go to Malacañang to ask for a portion of the equalization fund.

"It could hurt me as you won't have to butter up to me like what you did in the past administration," she continued in Filipino.

San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito, son of ousted President Joseph Estrada, did not show up for the last day of the assembly, although he was there in the past two days for the workshop.

He also avoided a face-to-face meeting with the President during a prayer rally last month.

SC relieves Garchitorena as Sandigan head

(From page A1)

under his division.

"There are some other cases not disposed of by other members of the court and it would seem that was held against me by the (SC) and well the SC is a better judge of what I should be liable for and that is what the SC has said and I will accept," he said.

Garchitorena said he was taking responsibility as head of the first division.

Asked if he felt denied due process because he was not previously asked to explain his side.

"No, I think not. The SC decides where due process comes. The SC has stated the basis for its decision and it's not for me to question the decisions of the SC, it's merely for me to illustrate matters for clarification," he said.

The Supreme Court has supervision over the Sandiganbayan, which handles corruption cases against government officials, including Estrada, the first Philippine president to face a criminal trial.

Conrad S. Tolentino of the Office of the SC Chief of Staff said the SC used the word "relief" and not "suspension" because Garchitorena will still receive his salary.

"He is relieved of all his administrative tasks but not excused from doing other duties like writing decisions," Tolentino said.

He explained that Garchitorena's relief "is effective even after he had finished resolving the pending cases. It's up to the SC if it will lift the relief order after six months."

Sandiganbayan Associate Justice Minita V. Chico-Nazario, who is the most senior associate justice, will take over as the court's presiding justice.

"Obviously she's more capable than I. I have no reason to believe Justice Nazario will be unable to take over effectively and it is my fervent hope that she will take over more effectively and perform the functions that I should be performing," Garchitorena said.

Vindication?

Though Garchitorena's relief could be seen as a vindication for

GARCHITORENA

Sandiganbayan third division chair Anacleto Badoy Jr., who had accused the former of forcing him to step down, the unprecedented relief adds another obstacle to ousted President Joseph Estrada's corruption trial.

Garchitorena is handling the Estrada perjury case, one of three lodged against the former president.

Garchitorena himself said his suspension had nothing to do with his feud with Badoy of the third division which is trying the plunder case against Estrada.

Garchitorena wrote a letter to the high court last October exposing Badoy's alleged absenteeism and inefficiency, which triggered a word war between the two magistrates.

Garchitorena laughed when asked if Malacañang had anything to do with his relief. His estranged wife, Vicky, recently resigned as Presidential Management Staff chief as she was "fed up with the "intrigues," she said.

Badoy interlude

Badoy was seen sleeping on the floor of the hallway of his chambers on Tuesday night.

His daughter and personal secretary, Christine Sanchez, explained that her father fell asleep while waiting for a locksmith.

She said her father had slept in his office and at about 1 a.m., he went out to check on his security.

But when he returned to his office, he could not open the door because it automatically locks from inside. She said her father called up her sister on his cellular phone.

"He had to look for a locksmith," she said.

Her sister, she said, was able to find a locksmith. But since he came from Roxas Blvd. in Manila, it took some time for him to get to the Sandiganbayan building in Batasan, Quezon City.

"There was no chair in the hallway and my father was very tired. So he just sat there and fell asleep while waiting for the locksmith," she explained.

The sleeping incident came after Badoy had his office off-limits to all his nine staff members, including his daughter, when he discovered the loss of a document related to the trial of Estrada.

A Sandiganbayan source said the document involved an unpromulgated ruling ordering the transfer of Estrada from the Veterans Memorial Medical Center back to his detention cell in Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

The source said Badoy sealed his office on order of the National Bureau of Investigation. The NBI lifted thumbprints from his office to determine who leaked the document.

The source said Badoy banned all his staff from his office to prevent the one who stole the document from returning it as if nothing happened.

Write decisions only

The SC said it decided to impose the administrative sanction on Garchitorena "so that he may devote himself exclusively to decision writing, until the backlog of cases assigned to him as well as cases not assigned to any ponente, of which he shall be deemed the ponente in the first division, are finally decided."

The high court barred Garchitorena from reassigning all his pending cases to other ponentes, saying "there shall be no unloading of cases to other divisions, or to the first division inter se."

The tribunal directed Garchitorena and all the Sandigan five divisions through the Sandigan associate justices to resolve all pending or backlog cases within six months.

The Court also ordered them to "decide/resolve the undecided cases submitted for decision as of this date, within three months from their submission, and to resolve motions for new trial or reconsiderations and petitions for review within 30 days from their submission."

The Court further ordered the Sandiganbayan en banc (full court) to adopt not later than Dec. 31 internal rules to govern the allotment of cases among the divisions, the rotation of justices among them and other matters leading to the internal operation of the court.

The internal rules should be submitted to the SC for approval.

The resolution was written by SC Associate Justice Bernardo P. Pardo and concurred in by 13 justices (Associate Justice Arturo B. Buena is on official leave).

IBP complaint

The SC resolution stemmed from an administrative complaint filed by the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) against Garchitorena on July 31, 2000.

The IBP, through its national president at the time, Arthur Lim, transmitted to the SC an IBP resolution addressing the problems of delays in cases pending before the Sandiganbayan.

The IBP resolution had recommended that the high court's Administrative Circular No. 10-94 be made applicable to the Sandiganbayan in cases over which the latter has original jurisdiction.

The circular mandates all trial courts to submit to the SC a bi-annual report on the disposition of cases falling under their salas.

The resolution recommended to the SC an inquiry into the causes of delay in the resolution of "incidents and motions and in the decision of cases before the Sandiganbayan."

The IBP said that since all trial courts were required to follow the 90-day reglementary period for the disposition of cases after termination of trial, and "considering that the Sandiganbayan is also a trial court, the requirements imposed upon trial courts by SC Adm. Cir. No. 10-94 should also be imposed upon the Sandigabayan."

415 pending cases

Acting on the IBP resolution, the SC ordered Garchitorena to submit a list of "all cases pending decision or with motion for reconsideration pending resolution."

On Sept. 27, 2000, Garchitorena submitted a report, which shows that the first division has 341 pending cases; second division, 5; third division (chaired by Badoy), 12; fourth division, 2; and fifth division, 52.

All these cases were already deemed submitted for resolution.

"Thus, the Sandiganbayan has a total of 415 cases for decision remaining undecided long beyond the reglementary period to decide, with one case submitted as early as May 24, 1990, and motion for reconsideration which has remained unresolved over 30 days from submission," the SC resolution said.

As of September 2000, 341 cases assigned with Garchitorena remained undecided with a number of cases that submitted for decision as far back as more than 10 years ago.

Garchitorena said there were "many things that get in the way" of speedy resolution of cases in the anti-graft court.

He said the procedure in the anti-graft court is more lengthy than in the regular court.

"There are only so many waking hours and if I have not been able to comply with all of them as things would require, well it is a shortcoming and there is a penalty that deserves to be imposed and that penalty shall be taken," he said.

The SC said that in one case, "he (Garchitorena) not only admitted the delay in deciding the case but took sole responsibility for such inaction for more than 10 years that constrained this court to grant mandamus to dismiss the case against an accused to give substance and meaning to his constitutional right to a speedy trial."

According to the SC, Garchitorena even failed to resolve a simple motion to withdraw the Information filed by a prosecutor seven years ago.

Mostly Marcos cases

Most of the unresolved cases involved the ill-gotten wealth of the Marcoses, behest loans and cases involving Marcos cronies.

Based on a judicial audit conducted by the SC Office of the Court Administrator, the SC found that "there are indeed hundreds of cases pending decision beyond the period of 90 days from their submission."

At least 73 cases have been unassigned for the writing of the extended opinion, though submitted for resolution, the SC added.

"The compliance submitted by the Sandiganbayan incriminates him. The memorandum submitted by the Office of the Court Administrator (OCA) likewise testifies to the unacceptable situation in the Sandiganbayan. Indeed, there is a disparity in the reports submitted by the Sandiganbayan presiding justice and the OCA," the SC stressed.

The SC pointed out that the Sandigan was covered not by the 12-month period but the 90-day reglementary period to resolve cases submitted for resolution.

The Constitution provides that a case shall be deemed submitted for decision or resolution upon the filing of the last pleading, brief or memorandum required by the Rules of Court, according to the SC.

"Again, we reiterate that decision-making is the most important of all judicial functions and responsibilities. In this area, Garchitorena, as the *ponente* assigned to the cases . . . has been remiss constituting gross neglect of duty and inefficiency," the resolution said.

"As we said . . . unreasonable delay of a judge in resolving a case amounts to a denial of justice, bringing the Sandiganbayan into disrepute, eroding the public faith and confidence in the judiciary," the SC stated.

4,000 ATHLETES

Lim to case venues of Batang Pinoy today

A BIG field that could reach the 4,000 mark would be standing before President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo when she declares open the third edition of the Philippine National Youth Games-Batang Pinoy this Saturday.

"Everything, from operations to billeting, from the opening to closing ceremonies, and practically all other aspects are ready for the third Batang Pinoy," said PSC Commissioner Amparo "Weena" Lim, who, to make sure that no kink is left unironed, would make the rounds of the venues and billeting centers today.

Lim said that as of Tuesday evening, unofficial head count of athletes arriving from various areas of the country already stood past 3,500 athletes.

The President has been invited as guest of honor of the Games Bacolod City and Negros Occidental are co-hosting for the second time at the sprawling Panaa-ad Sports Complex.

LIM

Besides the President, also expected to grace the colorful opening ceremonies that kick off at 2 p.m. at the Panaa-ad main stadium are Philippine Sports Commission Chair Carlos Tuason, Department of Education Secretary Raul Roco and Department of the Interior and Local Government Secretary Joey Lina.

Registration officially started yesterday but since athletes and officials from majority of the 115 local sports councils (local government units) have started to arrive in droves in Bacolod City beginning Monday, the PSC expects attendance to be in the vicinity of the 4,000-athlete mark.

Officials and chaperones are also expected to be close to half the number of athletes competing in 15 sports in the meet spread over seven days, making Bacolod City and Negros Occidental the country's sports hub for the fourth straight year.

The Panaa-ad also played venue to the Centennial (1998) and Millennium (2000) Palarong Pambansa and the Batang Pinoy Inaugurals in 1999.

On the hosts' end, Negros Occidental Gov. Joseph Maranon and Vice Gov. Isidro Zayco and Bacolod Mayor Joy Valdez and Vice Mayor Ramiro Garcia as well as Bacolod Rep. Monico Puentevella expressed optimism about the success of the third Batang Pinoy.

An innovation in the third Batang Pinoy, which is the first major national multi-sport competition under the administration of President Arroyo, is the PSC's success in involving the private sector in its grassroots sports development program.

Supporters include Negros Navigation, Automated Technology Phils. Inc., Dunlop-Slazenger Philippines, Kyx-Eljan Ventures, Frabelle Fishing Corp., dwWW 774 AM, Hidden Springs, LandBank, National Sports Grill, Nestle Milo Sportsfest, Pascual Lab. Inc., Philippine Airlines, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Philippine Star, Reliv, Smart Communications, Sonia Trading (Asics, Mikasa, Butterfly and Nittaku), Speedo, Unilever, Victor Sports Corp., West Negros College, WG&A Lines, Philamlife, Jollibee and Vallacar Transit Inc.

Competitions will be in athletics, badminton, boxing, chess, football, gymnastics, dancesports, lawn tennis, Little League baseball, Little League softball, swimming, table tennis, karatedo and volleyball.

Cuyapo Kid

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

PERCY Della, who traded a blooming sportswriting career here for a life of ease(?) in America, is due to arrive today from his base in Sacramento, California. Finally, the Cuyapo Kid is coming home after a self-imposed exile that began nearly a quarter of a century ago. Never gave us any reason why he left.

No, he's not coming home for good. He's not even the Prodigal Son. He's coming home to bury his mother, Basilisa Domingo Della, in Cuyapo, Nueva Ecija, on Saturday. His mom, Percy loved to say, was the reason he became a journalist; he said during one drinking spree with him in in his adopted country that he was first a writer "before I decided to become a journalist."

Percy's mother, a schoolteacher, came to me some 23 years ago when Percy was already in faraway land.

"Percy wrote to say he wanted you to take care of his portable typewriter," she said.

She came to the office. She refused a chair. And I remained standing all the while that she was there.

Her wish never materialized. A guy who was supposed to deliver "Percy's Armalite" to me never came.

Percy's mother was the typical barrio folk. Face unmade. Hair in a bun. Blackish skin, like the color of a brook. She wore a dress so simple you'd mistake her for a *labandera*. But beneath that humble façade was stored a wealth as priceless as Van Gogh's Iris. Seemingly, she had bequeathed all that to Percy.

Percy had her eyes: Round and black, piercing but not annoying. His short stint at sportswriting reflected the pierce, if not the fierceness, in his mother's eyes. Had he not left, he would have become one of the nation's top sportswriters today—if not the best.

Welcome home, Perci-bull.

■

The letter below came from Commissioner William Ramirez of the Philippine Sports Commission, who is also the PSC executive director. It is self-explanatory. I'm publishing it in its original form out of respect for the Honorable Commissioner.

Dear Mr. Mendoza,

This is in reference to the incident occurred yesterday when the security guard delayed the entry of Ernie U. Sarmiento, chief photographer of PDI, at the gate going to RMSC tennis court to cover the said event.

I would like to extend my sincerest apology to you, especially to Ernie for the unwelcome greetings met by the latter.

This is to inform your good office that the PSC is not a garrison state and I will never allow that to happen. What happen yesterday was that there was a little misunderstanding and misinterpretation of getting permit when someone is covering an event inside the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex from the operation division of PSC.

The covering media that will secure a permit to cover are only those Media who uses big apparatus or equipment such as OB Van when it is necessary to bring it inside the premises of the PSC. The sportswriter and photographer is exempted and need not secure any permit to cover an event that is happening inside the PSC and as well as to enter its premises.

Again, my apology to the Philippine Daily Inquirer and I will personally look into this matter. I will never allow this to happen again to your photographer or anybody else in the media because I believe in the "Freedom of the Press". Seeking your understanding and thank you.

Sincerely,
WILLIAM I. RAMIREZ
Commissioner/Executive Director

■

Apology accepted, Sir.

NSAs sign statement of unity

BY MARC ANTHONY REYES

THE PHILIPPINE Olympic Committee managed to tackle a number of pressing problems of the different national sports associations yesterday but POC chair Robert Aventajado admitted that peace and harmony in sports is still a long way to go.

Presiding over the Olympic body's last general assembly meeting for the year, Aventajado said they are still working on solving conflicts inside the POC and putting Philippine sports on track for the Asian Games in Pusan, South Korea next year.

That despite the fact that 39 NSA officials, surprisingly led by Philippine Amateur Track and Field Association president Go Teng Kok, signed a statement of unity and solidarity during their four-hour meeting at the Philippine Columbian Association.

Go, a staunch critic of POC president Celso Dayrit, raised several issues in some NSAs but his attempt to itemize the alleged graft practices of some POC-sanctioned NSA presidents was cut short to make sure all essential topics are discussed.

"I did my best to raise their concerns, it's not in my hands anymore," said Go, referring to NSAs who asked for his support. "I hope I was able to help in my own humble way."

Contrary to what everybody expected, the meeting went smoothly. "We emphasized unity and proper decorum throughout the meeting," said Aventajado. "There was no fireworks because firemen came to put out fire."

The general assembly also ordered that the Philippine Weightlifting Association hold an election on Feb. 2 to finally solve the leadership dispute in the association between contesting parties Jaime Sebastian and Rudy Sicat, who both agreed with the decision.

DAYRIT

GO

As for the Amateur Cycling Association of the Philippines, the general assembly decided to throw the leadership issue back to the arbitration committee even as the warring factions reportedly agreed to a compromise "power sharing" scheme.

Aventajado, who took the cudgels from Dayrit who was also present, said Acap's problems will be further discussed in the next general assembly next year.

The Olympic body also decided to let Freddie Jalasco stay in the powerful POC executive board despite not having an NSA to represent, citing the case of former POC president Rene Cruz, who held his position even after giving up his position in badminton.

Karatedo will also bring its case to the arbitration committee, while the complaints against arbitration committee head Claudio Altura was deferred because the sailing association president was not present.

Hapee booters 3rd at Alabang

THE HAPEE football team took home the trophy for third place at this year's Alaska Football Cup, which drew over 200 teams at the Ayala Alabang Country Club.

The Hapee team boasts of topnotch members, with coach Glen Ramos as the head of the team.

Ramos has played on the national team for six years, where he joined various competitions abroad.

He is a licenced coach of the Asia Football Confederation and a former Military Academy Coach.

This is the team's first year to play under Hapee's sponsorship, and members are looking forward to a long, and successful career under the wings of the well-known Filipino-owned toothpaste company.

SPORTSWATCH

Santisima golf unfolds

THE SANTISIMA Trinidad Parish located at 1127 Estrada St. cor Dian Street, Malate, Manila will hold its first golf tournament today at Villamor. Tee-off time is 6 a.m. in the event featuring Classes A, B and C. Raffle prizes are at stake, according to Fr. Domingo Baybay. Arthur A. Cayabyab and Frank Fernandez organized the tournament sponsored by Pronto Express Distribution Inc., Permanent Plans Inc. Councilor Kim Atienza, Overseas Placement Ass. of the Phils, Del's Apparel Corp. SM Investment Corp. Bebot Orgas Gen. Merchandising, Robinson's Land Corp. Architect Collective, Triple "V" Group of Co., Fairways and Bluewaters Golf & Country Club, Subic Bay Waterfront Dev. Corp., Davies Paint, LOL Realty Corp., Councilor Mitz Cuna, Parada & MEI Placement Intl.

Buendia LGBA champ

BATANGAS breeder Mike Buendia emerged the Luzon Gamecock Breeders Association (LGBA) Breeder of the Year last week at Mandaluyong Coliseum after his entry Buenas Dias amassed 14 points in three LGBA derbies. Lawyer Joey Mendoza of Rizal (Tagapo Farm) and Dr. Gil Nicolas, Wilson Go and Obet Guevarra (632 Gamefarm) were runners-up with identical 13.5 points followed by Jun Sevilla of Batangas (JRS Spectrum, 13), Biboy Enriquez of Rizal (Ucap March 19-21) and Romy Tan of Pangasinan (JMT Black Stallion II) who tallied 12 points each.

LA 939 derby on

RESPECTED cockers from Metro Manila and nearby provinces will meet today for the much-awaited LA 939 4-Cock Derby at the Roligon Mega Cockpit in Parañaque City. Among those who will participate in this derby with a guaranteed cash prize of P250,000 are William Go, Boyboy Roa, Emit San Juan, Pol Estrellado, lawyer Rudy Salud, Dennis del Rosario, Bobby del Rosario, Vic Yu, Lito Orillaza, Boy Diaz, Boyet Plaza and others. Well-known cocker-breeder Lito Alcantara is host. Promoter Danny "Showdown" Ty said that weights between 1.8 kgs and 2.4 kgs must be submitted on the day of the derby from 6 a.m. to 11 a.m.

RACING TIPS

AT SANTA ANA BY MR. 999

Race 1—1. Heavenly 2. Jessie James 3. Letshaveaparty 4. All Grace 5. Bumper to Bumper

Race 2—1. Super Dancer 2. Sea Wolf 3. Diva Dixie 4. Howard Huge 5. Tomahawk

Race 3—1. Hezagonebabes 2. Sprint Free 3. Color of the Wind 4. Eyewitness 5. Day and Night

Race 4—1. Powerhouse 2. High and Mighty 3. Perfect Nine 4. Impeachment

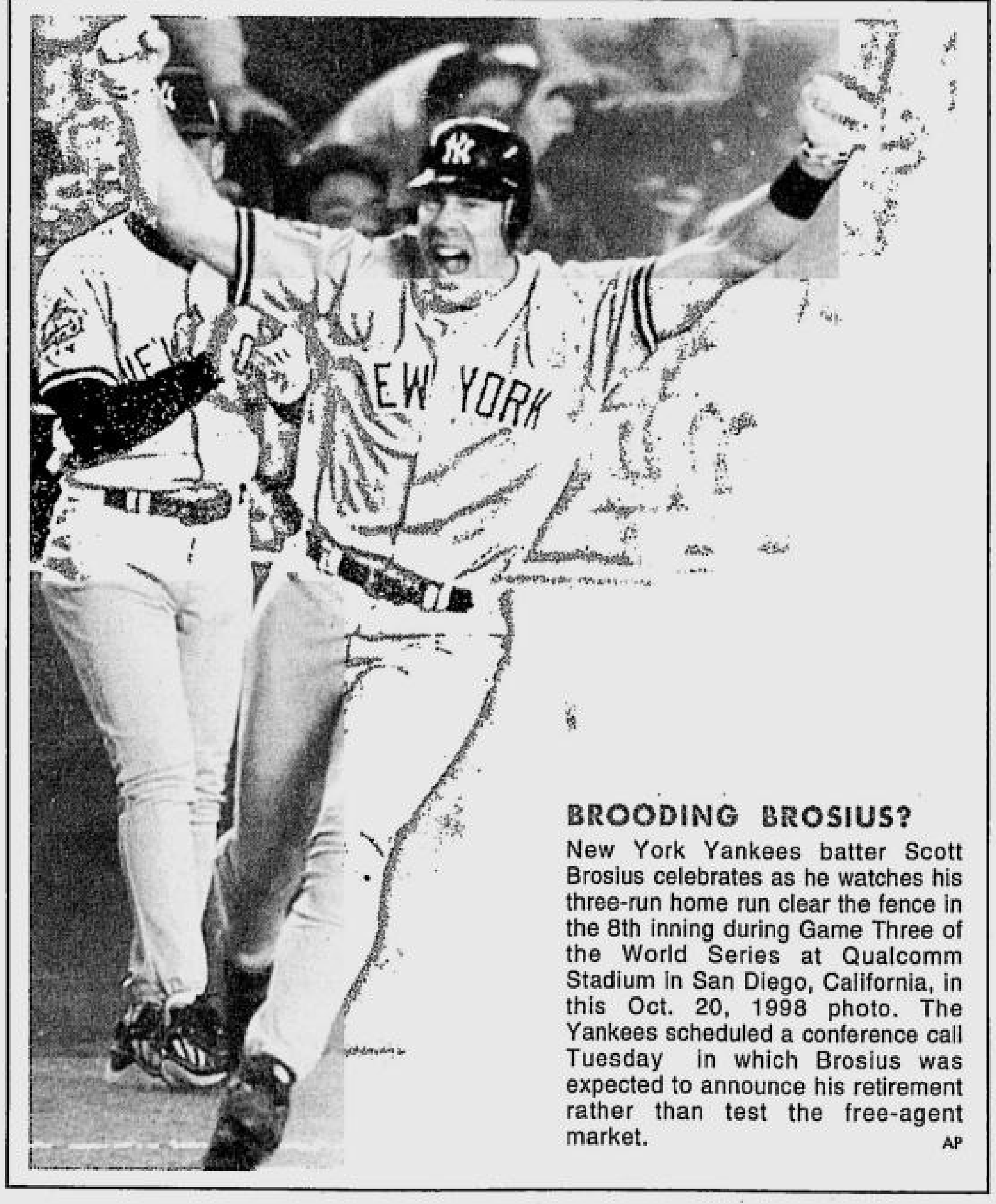
Race 5—1. Cardinal Rule 2. Beatitudes 3. Photogenic 4. Win More

Race 6—1. Earth Angel 2. Union City Boy 3. Boy From Brazil/The Mailman 4. El Bulldog 5. A Fair to Remember

Race 7—1. Bohemyo 2. Cubano 3. Lady Queen 4. Rainmaker 5. Aprey's Choice

Race 8—1. Crystal Horizon 2. Clear Sky 3. Suterian Era 4. Smart Kevin 5. May's Magic

Race 9—1. Guguy's Legacy 2. Silver Print 3. Walang Hanggan 4. Hong Kong Treasure 5. Taskmania



BROODING BROSIUS?
New York Yankees batter Scott Brosius celebrates as he watches his three-run home run clear the fence in the 8th inning during Game Three of the World Series at Qualcomm Stadium in San Diego, California, in this Oct. 20, 1998 photo. The Yankees scheduled a conference call Tuesday in which Brosius was expected to announce his retirement rather than test the free-agent market. AP

Silverio leads motorsports heroes at Casino Filipino

THE COUNTRY'S motorsports heroes who excelled in their respective fields in the year about to end will be honored in fitting ceremonies at the Casino Filipino Ampitheater in Parañaque City on Tuesday, Dec. 4.

Newly crowned Asian Formula 3 champion Jojo Silverio of Standard Insurance-Caltex-Team Tom's Racing Team and Philippine National Touring Car titlist Jody Coseteng of Red Horse-Caltex-Eclipse-Team Toms head the list of awardees who will be feted for their achievements in the Casino Filipino Grand Prix this year.

Hon. Efraim Genuino, chairman of Pagcor, the event's major sponsor, will present the trophies to the awardees. Genuino, who believes that Filipinos can excel in this sports given the proper grassroot development, supports youth development through motosports promotion.

Silverio, son of well-known car racing champion turned-basketball coach Dante Silverio, made motorsports history by ruling the inaugural staging of the prestigious Asian Formula 3 Championship which ended in Zhuhai, China earlier this month. He won over British driver Mark Goddard of Ghiasports and Philip Alvendia of Kart 1.

And Coseteng, scion of another family with long and active involvement in sports, topped the Philippine National Touring Car Series over perennial contender Nilo Pazcoguin and actor-sportsman Jomari Yllana in both the Batangas Racing Circuit and Subic International Raceway.

Also to be honored are:

- Roland Hermoso of Standard Insurance-KACE Electronics-Toyota Alabang-Petron Racing Team for winning the Formula Toyota Cup over Enzo Pastor of Team TEC-Shell Racing and J.P. Tuason of Standard Insurance-KACE Electronics-Toyota Alabang at the Batangas Racing Circuit in Rosario, Batangas.
- Carlos Anton of Zed-MP Turbo-Gulf Oil Racing Team for winning the Shell Philippine Junior Touring Car Series over Carlo Pastor of Team TEC and Alex Padua of Zed-Gulf Oil-MP Turbo.
- Jolet Jao of Shell Advance-YRS Racing Team for winning the National Super Bike Championships over Toti Alberto of Castrol-Access Plus and Rey Relativo at the BRC and Subic.
- •Pepon Marave of Demvel's Enterprises for winning the "Karter of the Year" award in the Shell Super Karting Series at the Carmona Racing Circuit in Carmona, Cavite.

Top officials of the Batangas Racing Circuit Association (BRCA) and Casino Filipino are expected to grace the two-hour long awarding ceremony.

Among those who actively participated in this year's motorsports series are Pilipinas Shell, Kilton Motors, Toyota, Norkis-Yamaha, MOF Group of Companies, Marlboro, Casino Filipino, CGU Insurance, Yokohama Tires, Shell Helix, Shell Velocity and Shell Citibank Mastercard.

For invitation and other inquiries, call the BRCA at tel. 817-2469.

Sanares, Dungca rule Orchard Founders plum

COLONEL Nestor Sanares rode on the solid game of guest partner Omar Dungca to clinch the overall plum in the fifth Founders Invitational Golf Cup—the annual member-guest tournament of the Orchard Golf and Country Club—recently.

The long-hitting Dungca fired a couple of sub-par rounds—a 71 at the Player course and a 67 at the Palmer—while Sanares ably handled his own handicap of 29 to combine for 120 points for a four-point victory.

Sanares added 32 points to Dungca's whopping 78 as they won over Mariano Marcos and Hector Miole in the 36-hole event which drew a record 208 teams. Marcos and Miole settled for the low gross award.

The division champions were Alfredo Jeanjaquet and Art Bernabe (Class A), Mario Badillo and Ric Alindayu (Class B), Fernando Pizarro and Efren Cruz (Class C) and Anthony Zamora and Ambrosio de Luna (Class D).

Providing the needed sponsorships were Ford Alabang, Cebu Pacific, Greens Management, The Turf Company, Aqua-Dyne, CICI Gen. Insurance, Clark Panham, C-PAL Metal Works, Emeritus Security, Exotic Gardens & Maintenance, Maisog Engineering, Int'l Exchange Bank, Sta. Elena Properties, Aeroplus Multi-services, Equitable PCIBank, Golf Library, Sehwani, Bathala Marketing, Knorr & Lipton by Caterplan, Bristol Myers, Microtel Inn-Eagle Ridge, PBCom, PX Depot-The Golfer's Club, Concepcion Carrier airconditioners and Transnational Diversified.

Dungca pulled off the Founder's Cup's best round with an assortment of six birdies against a lone bogey on the 17th.

Jeanjaquet-Bernabe finished nine points ahead of Urbie Burgos-Hermie Patrimonio with their 161; Badillo-Alindayu posted a four-point win over Felipe Judan-Pastor Zamesa with a 164; Fernando Pizarro-Efren Cruz edged Vicente Marquez and Manolo Agojo after a 167 and Esguerra-Mendoza tallied 165 for a two-point win over Anthony Zamora-Ambrosio de Luna.

Davila Payatas winner

RAMON Davila topped the recent 2001 Payatas Charity Open Golf Classic at Alabang. A fund-raising event presented by the Prudential Life Plan Group in partnership with Operation Blessing, the tournament was organized for the benefit of children scavenger families in Payatas. Other winners were Moises Garcia, Edward Chiongbian, Diony Fabro, Mark Tanglao, Luigi Tabuena, Emy Arcilla, Homer Blanco, Jojo Velasquez, Nereo Velasquez and Leo Villanueva. Hole sponsors were ABS-CBN, Alpha Omega Foundation, AMICI Hans Brumann, Citra Metro Manila Tollways Corp., Coffeemate, Custom Clubmakers, Pizza Hut, HB Lotilla Construction Co. Inc., La Cremeria, Nescafe Gold, Omega Plus, Rogin-E, SRC and Swire Travel Philippines.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

TODAY in 1995, Efren 'Bata' Reyes beat American Kim Davenport, 11-9, to capture his fifth Professional Billiards Tour title at the 2nd Annual Pro Tour Championship in Kentucky. Also today in 1992, Nathaniel 'Tac' Padilla tallied 567 points to rule the center fire pistol event in the PSC-sponsored shooting eliminations at the Marine Range in Ft. Bonifacio.

Anand upset in Fide Moscow championship

MOSCOW —Defending world champion Vishwanathan Anand of India suffered a stunning defeat Tuesday in the opening round of the Fide world chess championships, losing while playing white to the tournament's lowest-seed player, Olivier Touzane of France.

The tournament is organized as a series of two-game elimination matches, with rapid and blitz playoffs in the case of ties. Anand will need to win with black in the Black first round's second game on Wednesday in order to stay alive in the competition.

Hungarian grandmaster Peter Leko, who was seated a few boards away, described Anand's position in the middlegame as "completely winning" and, in addition, he had a large advantage on the clock.

But, said American master Michael Greengard, Anand apparently got lazy and overconfident: "He just played some natural looking moves very quickly when there was still serious chess to be played."

With the exception of Anand's game, the round went largely as expected, with a few of the higher seeds giving up draws, but no losses.

Alexander Morozevich, Vassily Ivanchuk, Boris Gelfand and Rustem Kazimdzanov—seeded 3, 4, 7 and 10 respectively—were unable to defeat their weaker opponents. After Anand, the next player to be upset was Bulgaria's Kiril Georgiev, seeded 14th, who lost to Fouad El Taher of Egypt. American Alex Yermolinsky upset Switzerlands Vadim Milov on board 47. *AP*

ANAND

Wizards lose again

CLEVELAND—Michael Jordan, who used to destroy the Cleveland almost every time he played them, scored 18 points Tuesday night as Washington lost again, 94-75, this time to the Cleveland Cavaliers. Ricky Davis scored 14 of his 18 points in the fourth quarter, and Lamond Murray had 14 points and 10 rebounds for the Cavs, who won their third successive game at home. *AP*

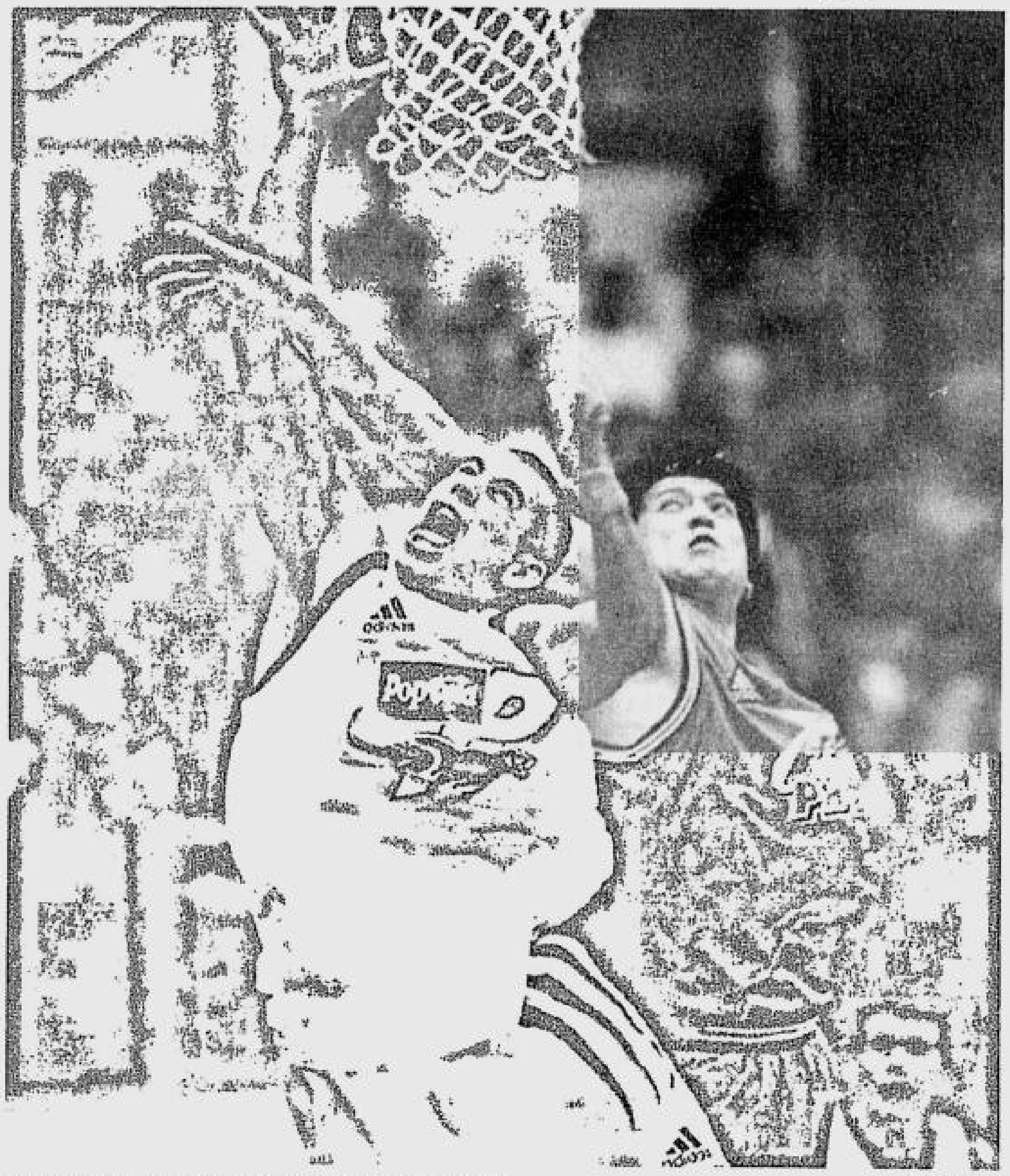
SPORTS

AL S. MENDOZA, Editor ▨ **EDWIN M. VILLANUEVA**, Assistant Editor

NBA results

Cleveland 94, Washington 75; Boston 84, Miami 83; New Jersey 100, Chicago 68; Sacramento 89, Houston 84; Dallas 116, Golden State 106; Portland 96, Indiana 90; Seattle 112, Minnesota 102; L.A. Lakers 104, Milwaukee 85. *AP*

SMB finalist again; Pop Cola clips SLR



HATFIELD (left): Big help from the backcourt.

FILEPHOTO

GAME TOMORROW: (Ynares Center)
7 p.m.—Sta. Lucia Realty vs Pop Cola

By June Navarro

LAMONT Strothers exploded for 54 points as San Miguel Beer downed Shell, 92-88, in overtime to advance to the Finals of the PBA Governors Cup at the Philsports Arena last night.

The 6-foot-2 Strothers fired six straight points in the extension period that enabled the Beermen to sweep the Turbo Chargers in their semifinal series, 3-0.

"We know that Shell will engage us in a down-the-wire battle. Luckily, Lamont was out there to give us a lot of relief," said San Miguel Beer coach Jong Uichico, who is seeking his sixth title since joining the Beermen two years ago.

The Beermen thus reached the Finals for the fifth straight time and appeared in seven of the last nine championship showdowns since 1999.

"Lamont will be needing a lot of rest, same thing with Danny Seigle who is slowly recovering from a back injury. I just hope Sta. Lucia and Pop Cola extend their series," added Uichico.

Earlier, Pop Cola contained Sta. Lucia Realty's primary offensive option to prevail, 86-76, and move closer to a championship appearance.

The Panthers took Damien Owens out of the scoring picture and at the same time shot splendidly from the floor to gain a 2-1 advantage in their best-of-five semifinal clash.

Owens, who averaged 23 points in the series, was limited to 12 points as he got smothered by a tight defensive umbrella thrown by the Panthers.

Marlou Aquino, too, wasn't spared from the Panthers' defensive crackdown as 6-foot-8 Cris Bolado applied pressure on him, leaving Dennis Espino to do the job for the Realtors.

The energetic Roselle Ellis led four Panthers in double figures. Ellis had 23 points on top of 11 rebounds, five steals and three assists.

Rudy Hatfield, who took care of the backcourt due to Johnny Abarrientos' absence, and Edward Juinio complemented Ellis with 18 and 17 while Nelson Asaytono chipped in 13 points.

POP COLA 86—Ellis 23, Hatfield 18, Juinio 17, Asaytono 13, Lastimosa 6, Morano 5, Bolado 4, Antonio 0, Ballesteros 0, Jarencio 0.

STA. LUCIA 76—Espino 23, Aquino 15, Owens 12, Francisco 8, Mendoza 6, Adriano 6, Belano 6, Del Rosario 0, Tan 0, Ortiguerra 0.

Quarters: 19-26, 42-41, 62-55, 86-76.

Guiao on Jacobs: I don't want to sound a 'sour grape'

By June Navarro

BASKETBALL Coaches Association of the Philippines former president Yeng Guiao yesterday said it would be mere "sourgraping" to comment on the ascension of San Miguel Beer consultant Ron Jacobs as head coach of the PBA-backed national team to the Asian Games next year.

But Guiao, who steered Batang Red Bull to the PBA Commissioner's Cup title this year, hinted that the group would meet soon to put up a common stand on Jacobs' appointment.

JACOBS

GUIAO

Although inactive as a coach, BCAP president Chito Narvasa is expected to convene all the members of the coaches' association to share their insights on the issue, Guiao said.

"I don't want to comment further because it would sound like I'm after the job. Let's just wait for the present BCAP president to take the initiative on what position the group will take," he added.

Guiao and Shell's Perry Ronquillo were among the top choices of Basketball Association of the Philippines president Quinteliano Literal to handle the national team, which will compete in the Pusan, South Korea meet in September.

During Guiao's watch in 1998, the BCAP showed its dissension on the appointment of Jacobs Asian Games mentor of the Centennial Team, forcing the multititled American coach to relinquish his post in favor of Alaska coach Tim Cone.

Cone, who is married to a Filipina, piloted the Centennial team spearheaded by Marlou Aquino, Kenneth Duremdes and Johnny Abarrientos to a bronze-medal finish in the Bangkok Asiad.

Earlier, Sen. Robert Jaworski, head coach of the 1990 RP squad which copped the silver in the Beijing edition of the Asiad, openly rejected Jacob's appointment, saying Filipino coaches are more than qualified for the job.

PBA Commissioner Jun Bernardino, however, said he is willing to face all the protests that would come his way.

Jacobs, who has had a winning record against powerhouse China, steered the country to an ABC title in 1986 and the Asian Youth crown in 1982. He also coached the RP Team to the 1985 World Club Championship in Girona, Spain, spearheaded by the likes of Allan Caidic, Samboy Lim, Yves Dignadice and Americans Chip Engelland and Dennis Still, among others.

Meanwhile, Narvasa said the BCAP would uphold Jacobs' appointment and support his programs for the national team in the Pusan, South Korea meet next year.

"We will not disrupt the preparation of the national team with Jacobs as head coach. We only want to express our opinion. After all, national interest is at stake," said Narvasa.

PBL: Blu tries to remain on top

STANDINGS	W	L
Blu	4	1
Shark	4	2
La Salle	3	1
Welcoat	3	2
Kutitap	3	4
Ana	1	3
Ateneo	1	3
Montana	1	6

GAMES TODAY
3:30 p.m.—Welcoat vs ICTSI-La Salle
5:30 p.m.—Blu vs Ateneo-Pioneer

BLU Detergent tries to retain the solo lead when it tackles Ateneo-Pioneer at 5:30 p.m. today in the 2001 PBL Challenge Cup at the Makati Coliseum.

In the other game, Welcoat Paints and ICTSI-La Salle collide at 3:30 p.m..

The games will be aired live over NBN-4.

Both the Detergent Kings and the Blue Eagle Insurers came from morale-boosting victories.

Blu stunned Welcoat Paints, 80-75, that put it on top of the heap with a 4-1 card.

Head coach Tony de la Cerna sees Ateneo-Pioneer a very challenging gauge as they prepare for their game against ICTSI-La Salle on Saturday.

Meanwhile, the Insurers seemed to have jelled much better as proven by its 66-49 triumph over ICTSI-La Salle Saturday night.

"It was one big win for us and I guess it was what the boys are waiting for to get into the groove," said Ateneo-Pioneer coach Ricky Dandan.

The Welcoat Paints versus ICTSI-La Salle tiff is also expected to be down-the-wire as both parade equally tall and talented players aside from having equally good champion coaches who etched their own historic feats in Philippine basketball.

Welcoat coach Junel Baculi, the only coach to have won four titles all via sweep, hopes his wards could snap out of two disheartening setbacks from Blu and Shark.

ICTSI Archers mentor Franz Pumaren, who chalked a four-peat title in the UAAP, wants his wards to get over the disappointing loss against archrival Ateneo-Pioneer and focus their minds on getting back on top.

"*Mabigat na ang tatlong sunod na talo.* We know that La Salle is also a tough collegiate team and we hope we will not coming the same lapses against Shark," said Baculi.

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Haswell rules yachting

ENGLISHMAN Mark Haswell ruled last weekend's 2nd Sail Round the Volcano regatta, a two-day, seven-leg race organized by the Taal Lake Yacht Club both as a major sailing event and eco-tourism project.

The 33-year-old Haswell, a yachting consultant of the Lopez family (ABS-CBN), banked on consistent finishes in all the races, including the last and deciding seventh leg where he finished third behind Hong Kong's top Hobie sailor Tong Sheen and Davao bet Rex Puentespina to win the overall championship.

Haswell, who had lawyer Ana Katigbak as crew, thus took possession of the Governor's Cup donated by Gov. Mandanas of Batangas.

Other sponsors were Puerto Atalaya, Bougainvilla Resort, and Tagaytay Highlands.

"We were not really expecting to win, all we wanted at the start was to perform well and finish all the races, what we did was to continuously look for the wind and avoid getting mixed up with the other boats, I guess our consistent finishes became the deciding factor," said Haswell.

Sheen, a stevedoring contractor and a veteran international campaigner suffered from unfamiliarity with the waters of Taal Lake but his vast experience was enough to propel him to second place overall," I like the sailing conditions here and I will be back with more Hong Kong sailors next year. I will also join again your Philippine Hobie Challenge next year," said Sheen, with ADB's Caroline Heider as crew.

Batangas, Cebu beat MBA rivals

GAMES TOMORROW
(San Juan Gym)
3 p.m.—LBC Batangas vs Andok's San Juan
(USLS Bacolod)
5:30 p.m.—Cebuana Lhuillier vs Negros

By Roy Luarca

LIPA CITY—The LBC Batangas Blades went into trouble and had to call on Romel Adducul and Alex Compton to down the Andok's San Juan Knights, 85-76, last night in the opener of their MBA Second Phase Northern Conference finals at the La Salle Lipa Sentrum here.

Adducul cashed in on two offensive rebounds, while Compton canned eight straight freethrows down the stretch as the Blades held off the tough-playing Knights, who missed the services of ailing pointguard Chito Victolero.

The Knights were in the game up to the final minute, 77-76, but they failed to score the rest of the way even as Compton went to town with his freethrows.

Best player honors went to Adducul, however, after he wound up with 21 points and 14 rebounds.

Game Two will be held at the San Juan Coliseum tomorrow due to the unavailability of the Sentrum.

Earlier, Bobby Jose and Stephen Padilla combined in a whirlwind Cebuana Lhuillier attack in the fourth quarter to power the Gems past the Negros Slashers, 88-86, in a stunning reversal in Game One of the Southern Conference finals at the USLS Gym in Bacolod City yesterday.

Just when the Slashers appeared headed for victory, 76-68, the Gems countered with an 18-2 run that suddenly changed the complexion of the game at 86-78, with 4 minutes and 4 seconds to go.

The Slashers rallied to within 86-84, but they failed to cash in on two attempts in the last 10 seconds to allow the Gems to grab the homecourt edge in the best-of-five series. Game Two is also scheduled at the USLS tomorrow, before the series swings to the Cebu City Coliseum for Games Three and Four. If necessary, Game Five will return to Bacolod City.

The Blades-Knights tussle marked the first time virtual technology in advertising was applied in the country. Virtual Image Philippines, a member of the LBC Group of Companies, is the exclusive rights holder of virtual technology for Asia in partnership with Ad Virtual Co. Ltd. of Korea.

Ramon Tuason, who conceptualized MBA, is the project director of virtual technology in advertising in the Philippines.

Scores:

CEBUANA LHUILLIER 88—Naron 19, Jose 17, Padilla 12, De Jesus 10, Yu 6, Santamaria 6, Se 4, Taguines 4, Mejia 4, Lura 4, Sayon 2, Solis 0.

NEGROS 86—Ferriols 21, Tierra 16, Cardel 16, Hugnatan 14, Bat-og 7, Madrid 5, Ignacio 2, Dela Rosa 2, White 2, Aldeguer 1, Huelar 0, Benedicto 0.

Quarters: 23-29, 43-53, 66-72, 88-86.

Archers triumph again

DE LA Salle-Manila and Emilio Aguinaldo College rolled to their second consecutive wins in the Group B seniors basketball competition of the National Capital Region Athletic Association yesterday at the Philippine Maritime Institute gym.

The Green Archers (2-0) applied a balanced attack to turn back listless National College of Business and Arts, 78-56, while the Generals (2-1) outlasted Olivarez College, 80-73, in this tournament backed by Pagcor, Pepsi Cola, Splash, Mikasa and the Department of Agrarian Reform.

Earlier, St. Benedict College registered is first victory in Group B by beating Feati University, 88-82.

Mark Cardona, who fired 40 points against PUP in a 116-112 win, need not push himself too hard this time as ne got ample support from Joseph Yeo (11 points), Mike Casino (11), Mira Vainio (nine) and Jun Jun Cabatu (nine).

The Green Archers never looked back after posting a 41-26 advantage after 20 minutes of action. NCBA absorbed its second straight loss.

The Generals frontline, meanwhile, did the most damage against Olivarez with Edcel Dumandan, Bong Melocoton and Nino Songco combining for 49 of the team's total output.

Help was scarce for Olivarez as only Melvin Sto. Domingo had a team-high 30 markers while Bobby Barnson had 11.

The Seahorses had the upper hand only in the first quarter when EAC's Songco and Dumandan started tearing Olivarez's interior defense that led to a slim 36-34 halftime lead.

But a killer 12-2 roll at the start of the final canto did it for the Generals, who padded a 66-54 lead to 69-54 advantage to cruise to victory.

Indonesian netter ousts Abadia in 2

INDON qualifier Peter Handoyo overpowered Filipino wild card Adelo Abadia, 6-2, 6-2, yesterday in the US$15,000 Tru-Flex ITF Philippines Men's Futures 1 at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

Handoyo, a bronze medalist in the Malaysia SEA Games last September, will meet No. 9 Daniel Andersson of Sweden, who posted a 4-6, 6-2, 6-3 victory over Victor Bruthans of Slovak Republic.

Joseph Victorino, another local wild card, also failed to advance in the next round after losing to Bulgarian Radoslav Lukaev, 2-6, 2-6.

Earlier, fourth seed Takahiro Terachi of Japan breezed past Benjamin Cassaigne of France, 6-1, 6-2 and No. 8 Rik De Voest of South Africa rallied past Toshihide Matsui, 6-2, 4-6, 6-1 to gain second-round slots in this 31-nation event supported by the ITF Grand Slam Development Fund, PSC, Viva Mineral Water, Manila Midtown Hotel and official ball Wilson.

Terachi, who scored a 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 first-round victory over American Cecil Mamiit in the Shanghai International Series two months ago, will next play Lior Dahan of Israel, a 6-3, 6-4 winner over Indon Hendri Susilo Pramono. De Voest will face Lukaev.

Scribes, fotogs to join Milo Marathon Dec. 9

SPORTS editors, sportswriters and photographers of nationally circulated broadsheets, tabloids and sports magazines are looking forward to a 5-Kilometer Media Run in the final race of the 25th National Milo Marathon to be held on Dec. 9 at the Quirino Grandstand, Rizal Park, Manila.

The Media Run will be an opportunity for sports journalists to take a breather from their work and get into sports themselves for a change, says MILO Sports Executive Jackby Jaime.

The Media Run promises fun, excitement and prizes for sports media participants.

The first placer wins P2,500 and a trophy, the second placer P1,500 and a trophy, the third placer P1,000 and a trophy, fourth placer P500 and a medal, and the fifth to 10th placers P250 and a medal each.

Sports writers/photographers and their editors are also awaiting results of the Media Writers' Contest and the Media Photo Contest which form part of the 25th Milo Marathon.

To qualify for the Media Writers' Contest, articles entered must capture and convey the spirit, essence, color and human dimensions of the 25th National MILO Marathon final race. Participating writers and editors must feature articles in their respective publications. Winners will take home P15,000 for the grand prize, P10,000 for second place, P5,000 for 3rd place and five consolation prizes of P2,000 each.

Meanwhile, participating photographers and editors in the Media Photo Contest must feature photos of winning moments or action shots in their respective publications. First prize is P15,000, 2nd prize is P10,000, 3rd prize is P5,000, and five consolation prizes of P2,000.

The centerpiece of the finale of the country's most prestigious running event is the 42.195-kilometer full marathon race.

Participants will consist of qualified runners of the 12 elimination races, which makes for a truly challenging competition. Adding a regional element of competition will be the participation of runners from other Asean countries selected by their respective national track and field associations. Other categories of the silver edition MILO Marathon finals are the 10-kilometer race, the 5kilometer Fun Run and the 3-kilometer Kiddie Run, which the public is cordially invited to join.

All photographers, writers and editors must submit a copy of their published photos and articles to Cathy Arguelles of Publicis-AMA, Inc. 9/F, IBM Plaza, # 8 Eastwood City CyberPark, E. Rodriguez Jr., Avenue, Bagumbayan, Quezon City.

Photographers and editors must submit a copy of their published photo (5R) and the details on when it was featured. Deadline for submission of entries is on Dec. 12. Winning entries will be announced on Dec. 18.

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CEBU: Park, Ayala Center; Stadium, SM City; Park, Robinsons Place. **ILOILO:** SportsCenter, Atrium; SportsCenter, SM CITY. **BACOLOD:** Sports Shop, Araneta Ave.; Park, Robinsons Place.

DAVAO: Athletic Club, Gaisano Mall of Davao. **CAGAYAN de ORO:** Stadium, Limketkai Mall

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BASKETBALL: US NCAA - Wisconsin Badgers vs Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets at 8:30 a.m. (r – 4 p.m. and midnight), Indiana Hoosiers vs North Carolina Tar Heels at 10:30 a.m. (r – 6 p.m.) on ESPN

NBA – Washington Wizards vs Philadelphia 76ers at 10 p.m. on NBN 4

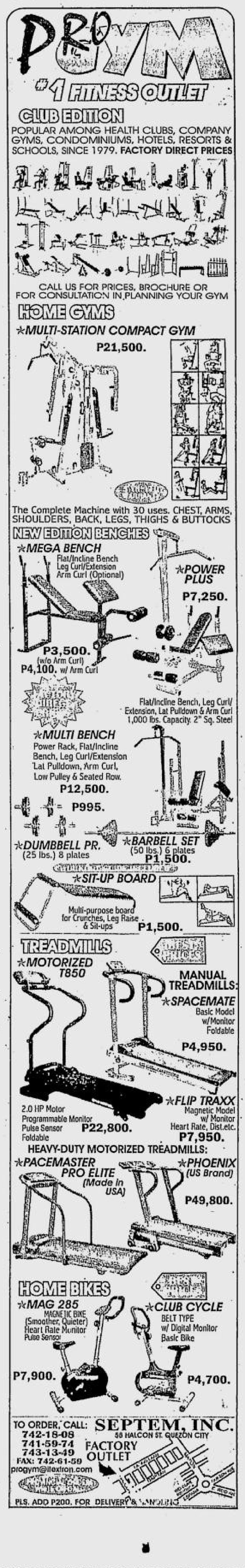
GOLF: The Straits Cup 2001, Day Four Highlights at 2 p.m. (r) on Star Sports

Nedbank Golf Challenge 2001, Day One at 11 p.m. on Star Sports

VOLLEYBALL: US NCAA - Women's Big Ten - Michigan State vs Ohio State at 1:30 p.m. (r) on ESPN

BASBALL: 1988 World Series - Game 2, Oakland Athletics vs LA Dodgers at 9 p.m. on ESPN

MARATHON: Sydney Marathon 2001, Event Highlights at 4 p.m. (r) on Star Sports



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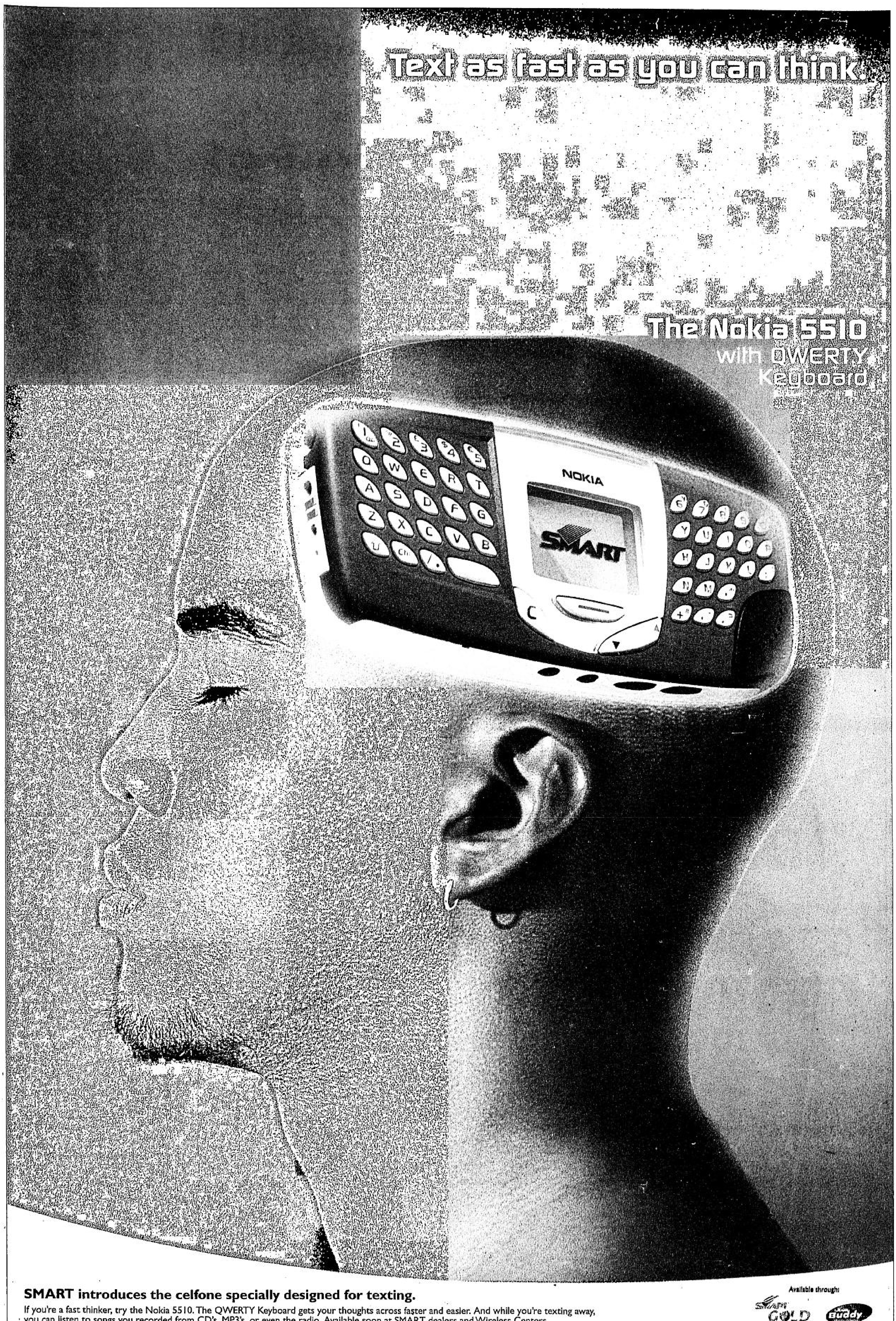
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MMDA abolition hot in the streets

BY ALCUIN PAPA

MORE sectors, including the country's largest transport group, are joining in the call to abolish the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA).

In a talk with reporters yesterday, the president of Pinagkaisahang Samahan ng Mga Tsuper at Operator Nationwide (Piston) said the MMDA should be abolished because of its failure to curb corruption and extortion in the streets.

"The traffic enforcers, together with police, are working together and extorting money from jeepney drivers. Because they (drivers) have to dole out money to unscrupulous traffic officers, their already meager income becomes smaller," said Medardo Roda, Piston president.

Roda also blasted MMDA traffic enforcers who unscrupulously issue tickets to supposedly erring jeepney drivers.

"Sometimes, they will add other violations just to harass the drivers," he said.

Meanwhile, the campaign to abolish the MMDA has also gained ground in Congress.

MMDA/ A24

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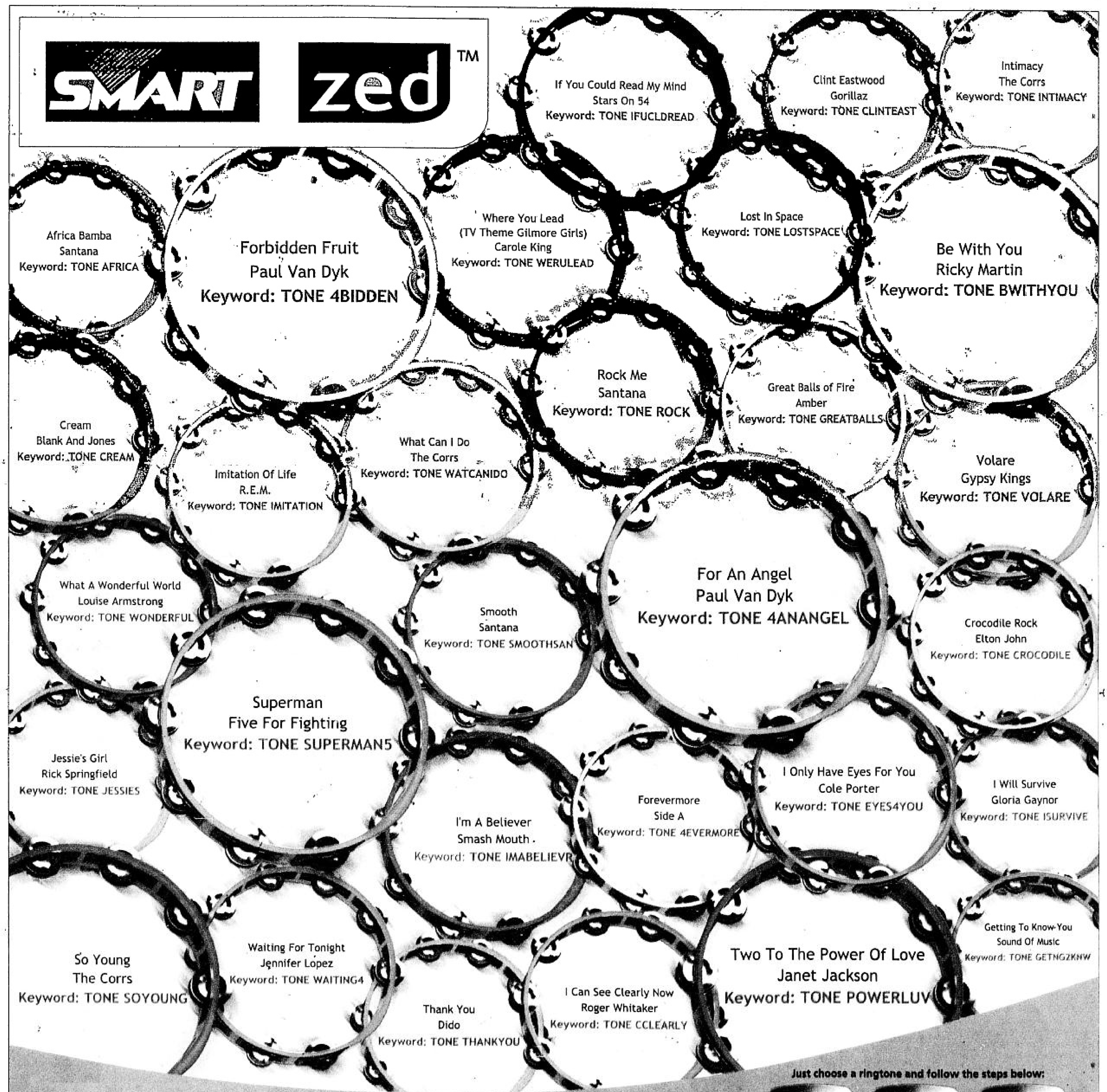

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Keyword: TONE AFRICA

Forbidden Fruit
Paul Van Dyk
Keyword: TONE 4BIDDEN

Where You Lead
(TV Theme Gilmore Girls)
Carole King
Keyword: TONE WERULEAD

Lost In Space
Keyword: TONE LOSTSPACE

Be With You
Ricky Martin
Keyword: TONE BWITHYOU

Cream
Blank And Jones
Keyword: TONE CREAM

Imitation Of Life
R.E.M.
Keyword: TONE IMITATION

What Can I Do
The Corrs
Keyword: TONE WATCANIDO

Rock Me
Santana
Keyword: TONE ROCK

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Amber
Keyword: TONE GREATBALLS

Volare
Gypsy Kings
Keyword: TONE VOLARE

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Louise Armstrong
Keyword: TONE WONDERFUL

Smooth
Santana
Keyword: TONE SMOOTHSAN

For An Angel
Paul Van Dyk
Keyword: TONE 4ANANGEL

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Elton John
Keyword: TONE CROCODILE

Jessie's Girl
Rick Springfield
Keyword: TONE JESSIES

Superman
Five For Fighting
Keyword: TONE SUPERMAN5

I'm A Believer
Smash Mouth
Keyword: TONE IMABELIEVR

Forevermore
Side A
Keyword: TONE 4EVERMORE

I Only Have Eyes For You
Cole Porter
Keyword: TONE EYES4YOU

I Will Survive
Gloria Gaynor
Keyword: TONE ISURVIVE

So Young
The Corrs
Keyword: TONE SOYOUNG

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Dido
Keyword: TONE THANKYOU

I Can See Clearly Now
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Court links to drug syndicates exposed

By Nelson F. Flores

ANTIPOLO City— A number of local court personnel are in cahoots with illegal drug syndicates, officials at the Provincial Police Office here disclosed yesterday.

To prove the charges, the police officials cited leakages before the issuance of search warrants for suspected drug dealers.

"Whenever we applied for a warrant against a known pusher in a particular town, we were certain that, in a matter of minutes, our efforts would be known to the drug dealer concerned, hence our failure to make any meaningful drug bust," said one ranking police official who asked not to be named. "We believe they have a tipster from within the courts."

RPPO intelligence men said the leaks have prompted police anti-drug operatives to secure search warrants for the suspects outside the province.

They added that, due to the involvement of court personnel with drug syndicates, the intense and sustained anti-drug operations of the police hardly made a dent on the drug syndicates.

Supt. Arturo Tolentino, RPPO director, would neither confirm nor deny the report. He however cited one instance when they had to apply for a warrant in Metro Manila against a suspected pusher based in Morong, Rizal.

"It was only then that we got a substantial volume of illegal drugs," Tolentino said.

Earlier, RPPO intelligence men revealed that they have uncovered an illegal drug network in the coastal towns of Rizal which extend to the southernmost towns of Metro Manila. Police said the drug dealers have turned the towns into transshipment points for the illegal commodity.

According to RPPO intelligence men, drug traffickers either transport illegal drugs like shabu from Quezon, Laguna and Batangas provinces to waiting drug peddlers in Taguig and other parts of southern Metro Manila via Rizal, or they ship the drugs over Laguna de Bay. They added operators of the drug network have vast resources to ensure that their shipments reach their destination safely.

They added the recent information provided by a drug suspect arrested in Pasay City confirmed police findings.

Suspected drug pusher Susan Estillo told investigators that she was getting her supply of methamphetamine hydrochloride or shabu from Maharlika Village, Taguig.

She said a number of drug pushers based in Pasay City also bought their supplies from the same place.

Estillo, 38, a known drug peddler, was arrested early last week in a buy-bust operation in Barangay Maricaban. Police seized some 30 grams of suspected shabu from Estillo.

Intelligence sources from the Southern Police District Office (SPDO) corroborated the RPPO findings and said Taguig has become a major trading center of shabu.

NBI closing in on Cinco murderers

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE NOOSE is getting tighter around the necks of the killers of former Commission on Elections director Velma Cinco.

A National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) official said they are now after five suspects in Cinco's murder, down from nine the other day.

The police have also tightened the security around the Cinco family to prevent any reprisals as investigators get nearer to solving the case.

"We've trimmed down the number after looking into their background," said Supt. Frederick Carlos, of the Western Police District-Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit.

The police compared the background and features of the nine original suspects to those of the two men in the police sketches of the gunmen who killed Cinco.

The four who were removed from the list apparently did not bear any resemblance to the persons in the police sketch. Carlos declined to identify who were the remaining suspects.

The late Comelec director, who was on her way to work with her son Carlo and sister Marian S. Jayme, was ambushed on Nov. 20 at the corner of Pedro Gil and Eden streets in Sta. Ana, Manila.

She was on her way to work on her red Kia Pride (with plate number TDR 779) when two motorcycle-riding men waylaid the victim.

Cinco, 62, died due to four gunshot wounds in her head and body. Carlo was hit in his right shoulder while Jayme escaped unhurt.

A male witness was standing at the Shell gas station at the corner of Tejeron and Pedro Gil streets around 7 a.m., or 40 minutes before the ambush, when he saw the suspect with their heads uncovered.

He told the NBI that one of the suspects had a white shirt tucked into his blue slacks while the other wore a light blue polo shirt, also tucked into his *maong* pants.

"This is a major breakthrough because we have narrowed down our list of suspects. Once the gunmen are positively identified, we will then move on to the mastermind," Castro said.

The task force yesterday had a follow-up operation but the ballistics tests on the four 9 mm spent shells found in the crime scene were not yet ready.

Castro said the task force is looking into three possible angles in the Cinco killings.

One was the victim's quarrel with her predecessor Angelina Matibag; a labor row involving casual employees, whom Cinco allegedly did not rehire when she took over the education and information department; and an extramarital affair between two of Cinco's employees, which the victim tried to stop.

Top cop feeling like Superman

By Christian V. Esguerra

CHIEF Supt. Romeo Maganto, in limbo for over a year, feels as frustrated as a doctor that's being restrained from curing the sick.

"Send me to Mindanao and I'll deal with the Moro rebels," Maganto said in challenging his superiors at the Philippine National Police to reactivate him.

"Give me six months and I'll neutralize kidnappers," he added.

A key player in Edsa 1 and 2, Maganto, 53, has been on floating status for over a year now. He is set to retire in three years.

"So this is what I get for serving my country for 28 years?" he told the Inquirer. "I'm like a doctor being prevented from practicing my profession."

The former director of the Southern Police District said he was willing to accept any assignment, particularly the task of dealing with secessionist rebels in Mindanao and kidnappers in Metro Manila.

"I would gladly accept the position of Region 9 director. I can do something about (Nur) Misuari's loyalists."

Maganto said he would also want to head a task force that would go after kidnapping syndicates in Metro Manila.

"If I can't neutralize these groups in six months, I'll resign immediately," he said, while noting the apparent failure of authorities to solve kidnappings and other high-profile crimes in the metropolis.

Maganto frowned on the practice of seeking the help of the United States in dealing with kidnappers and terrorists groups.

"The government should utilize the experience and expertise of over 20 police generals currently on floating status," he said.

Maganto claimed he and police officials in floating status "have largely been victimized by politicking."

"We're being set aside because we're not part of the 'group,'" he said, asking the National Police Commission to look into the matter.

Maganto claimed that a high-ranking official of the Senior Officers' Placement and Promotion Board has been blocking his appointment in any position.

Maganto said he drew the ire of the official after he supposedly upstaged him during their stint at the Western Police District, during which he was a station commander.

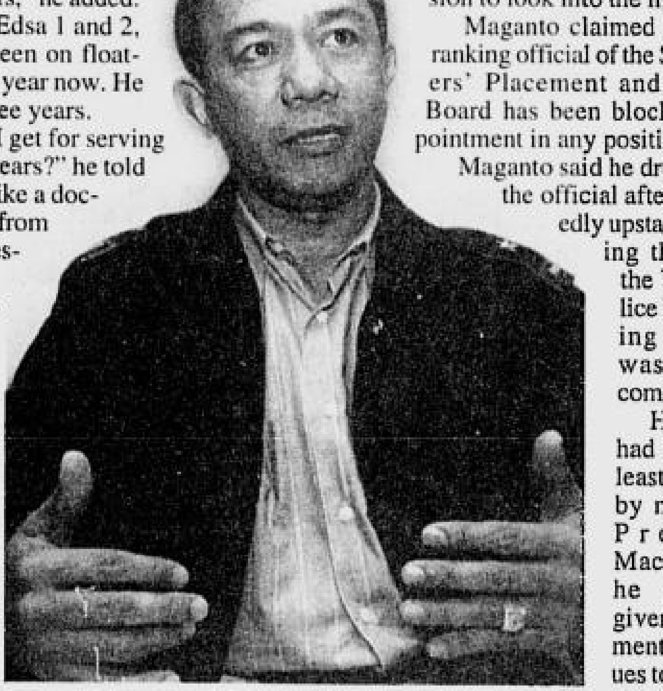
He said he had been told at least three times by no less than President Macapagal that he would be given an assignment. He continues to wait for the presidential promise to be fulfilled.

Maganto said his challenge to take on any assignment at the PNP was not an empty boast, considering his accomplishments throughout his 28-year career in the police force.

He said he was among those who led the march of anti-Estrada protesters from the Edsa Shrine to Malacañang last January.

He was severely wounded and nearly got killed while fighting rebel soldiers in the 1989 siege of Makati.

He has a badly scarred left leg to show for his badge of courage.


MAGANTO

Soldiers looked like fools in Zamboanga

On Target

Ramon Tulfo

THE AFP troops were made to look fools in the Zamboanga City hostage crisis. They allowed renegade Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) rebels to escape in exchange for the lives of the innocent civilians they turned into human shields.

It was a no-win situation for the government at the start. The MNLF holdouts were left alone even while their comrades in Sulu were attacking military camps. They took advantage of the government's kid-gloves treatment toward them.

Nur Misuari's loyalists in Zamboanga moved against the government without difficulty because the military was not prepared to deal with them. Had they been disarmed while the uprising in Sulu was in progress those Misuari loyalists would not have made fools of government troops.

***

Nagmukhang tanga na ang militar sa Basilan, *nagmukhang tanga ulit sa* Zamboanga!

For crying out loud, when will our military stop looking like bumbling amateurs when they're ranged against the Moro bandits and rebels! Every time there's a hostage situation, the Moro bandits escape.

When will they outgrow their clumsiness ?

***

To the rest of the world, our military is composed of bumbling nincompoops that can't even handle a ragtag band of armed Moros.

The terrorist group Abu Sayyaf has been thumbing its nose at government troops who are pursuing it in the Basilan jungles.

The American couple Martin and Gracia Burnham have made a heart-wrenching cry for their freedom. But the government is helpless.

***

Why don't we just let the American troops now here to observe the government rescue efforts for the Burnhams go after the Abu Sayyaf ?

The suggestion might sound stupid considering that our Constitution prohibits foreign troops in our soil. But if employing US soldiers to go after those Osama Bin Laden-supported terrorists will save the Burnhams, why not?

After all, terrorism to the US is an international crime. The Americans are in Afghanistan fighting terrorism. Why can't they be allowed to fight terrorism in our country?

***

Businessman Lepeng Wee heaved a sigh of relief yesterday when he received a Department of Justice decision dismissing two criminal complaints against him.

"Now, I'll be able to sleep soundly," he told me.

The criminal complaints were instigated by Wee's political enemy, the Lobregats of Zamboanga. Wee ran for mayor against Maria Clara Lobregat in the last elections. Lobregat won.

***

The complaints, filed separately, were for smuggling and illegal possession of dangerous chemicals.

They were filed by Zamboanga City Customs Collector Lourdes Mangawang, many say at the instance of Lobregat and her son, Rep. Celso Lobregat.

The case dragged on for more than a year. Wee was investigated by Congress upon the instigation of Congressman Lobregat. Congress found Wee innocent. The Lobregats then brought the case before another forum, the Zamboanga City prosecutor's office.

If that was not harassment, what do you call that?

***

Officers of homeowners associations in exclusive villages ought to know they are in that position because they were installed by members of the association. Their position does not clothe them with the power to harass a homeowner.

Romulo del Rosario, chair of the construction committee of the Greenmeadows Homeowners Association in Quezon City, should be reminded of this. A homeowner has complained to this corner that Del Rosario has been harassing and intimidating all visitors to his home.

Per the homeowner's account, Del Rosario insists that some changes be made on the front of his residence. The homeowner has refused to abide by Del Rosario's demands.

Indeed, since when did homeowners association officers have the right to impose demands on private homeowners in a subdivision?

***

To get back at the homeowner, Del Rosario has allegedly ordered security guards not to allow any visitors to his home.

Del Rosario probably thinks he's still in a martial law government set-up. He was the Manila city engineer during the time of Mayor Ramon Bagatsing. The Bagatsing administration spanned the martial law years when government officials were very powerful.

Wake up, Private Citizen Del Rosario! We're no longer in the martial law era.

Lt. Gen. Joh Calimlim is retiring from the military service today which is also his birthday. For more than a month before today, the general has been going all over the country to bid farewell to military officers and men who were earlier under his command. This is indeed a most laudable gesture from a retiring general.

We wish the good general success in all his future endeavor after retirement.

Couple killed inside jeep

A PASSENGER jeep driver and his woman companion were shot dead by two gunmen in full view of shocked commuters in Mandaluyong City late yesterday afternoon.

Police identified the victims as Teddy Mojico and Ofelia Ruiz, both residents of 641 Nueve de Febrero St., Mandaluyong City. They died on the spot due to gunshot wounds in the head.

Several empty shells of .9mm and .45 caliber pistols were recovered from the crime scene indicating that at least two gunmen were involved in the incident, police said.

The shooting happened about 5:30 at the corner of San Clemente Street and Shaw Boulevard, near the Mandaluyong City Cockpit Arena.

SPO4 Jaime Masilang, desk officer of the Mandaluyong City police station, said the victims were on board a jeep plying the Libertad-Kalentong route when gunned down. He said the male victim was driving the jeep, with registration plate NVH 910, while his lady companion was seated beside him.

Masilang said the victims were shot at point blank range. He added that after the shooting, the gunmen calmly walked away.

Masilang ruled out robbery as the motive, adding that no personal items were taken from the victims. He said love triangle was being considered as motive since the victims were living as husband and wife. *Nelson Flores*

Warrant lifted

A MALOLOS judge has lifted the arrest warrant for the president of the Rural Bank of San Miguel (Bulacan) Inc.

On Nov. 22, Judge Arturo Tayag of the Malolos Regional Trial Court branch 79 lifted the arrest order for RBSM president Hilario P. Soriano, a day after the court issued the warrant.

According to a statement from the Central Bank, Soriano allegedly failed to attend his arraignment on Nov. 21 for estafa through falsification of commercial documents and for violation of Sec. 83 of Republic Act No. 337.

In a statement, Soriano said he filed a motion for reconsideration wherein he detailed before the court the reasons for his absence.

Soriano said the court accepted his explanation and lifted the arrest order the following day.

She always wanted to be an angel

By Cristina Arzadon
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

LAOAG CITY—Former beauty queen and actress Maria Teresa Carlson was worried about her six children with former Ilocos Norte governor and former congressman Rodolfo Fariñas before she fell to her death on Friday from her 23rd floor condominium unit in Greenhills, San Juan.

In a text message she sent to her friend Tina Gao, who was also her neighbor in Platinum 2000, Carlson said she felt guilty for "not having lived up to the obligation."

"Well, I haven't been too well. Loneliness started to kill me. It is tearing me apart. I don't really understand it. It's probably my guilt for not having lived up to the obligation," read Carlson's text message to Gao.

Carlson lived alone in her condominium unit with only a stay-out maid. Her six children with Fariñas live with father in Laoag City.

"I feel so frantic, worried for my kids for I'm on a continuous struggle to try to attain health for those I care. You have seen with your own eyes how heavy the load and now how lonely I am. Thank you. That's a friend, thus, good and bad always a friend. Take care," continued Carlson's text message to Gao.

Gao said she received the text message on Nov. 23, the day before Carlson died.

She said she moved in her condominium unit on the 22nd floor of the building in July last year and became close to Carlson.

Gao and Sandy Sta. Maria, another friend of Carlson's, were here on Tuesday for Carlson's wake.

They described Carlson as very thoughtful, accommodating and friendly. They said they went out to shop or eat dinner together.

Sta. Maria recalled that they went inside Carlson's house on Thursday afternoon and saw the former actress crying because she missed her children.

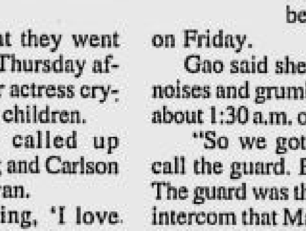
She said they then called up Carlson's children in Laoag and Carlson talked to her eldest son Ryan.

"We heard Maria saying, 'I love you, I love you,'" Sta. Maria said.

After the phone call, Sta. Maria said they asked Carlson to go out with them for dinner, but she declined and said she was tired.

Gao was the friend who called up Fariñas at 1:30 a.m. on Friday to tell him that Carlson was dead.

But other neighbors of Carlson said the former actress had feared her husband, whom they said was overbearing and troublesome.


CARLSON

A neighbor complained that Fariñas had even pulled out his gun on one of the building's residents during an altercation about parking space.

Earlier, some of Carlson's neighbors and the guards in the building described the former beauty queen as a lonely and troubled woman, who was alternately sweet and rude to them. They claimed they also heard screams from her unit long before she fell to her death on Friday.

Gao said she was awakened by loud noises and grumbles from Carlson's unit about 1:30 a.m. on the night Carlson died.

"So we got up and were about to call the guard. But it happened so fast. The guard was the first to call us through intercom that Maria fell or jumped from the building."

Gao described Fariñas as shocked when she told him of his wife's death.

She said she believed Carlson when she insisted she would never take her own life because she always wanted to be an "angel."

"I told her, remember you want to be an angel so never, ever think of jumping off or committing suicide because you will end up in hell, you'll never be an angel," Gao said.

Rizal reunion

THE RIZAL High School Alumni Association will hold its 14th grand reunion on Sunday at the school campus in Pasig City.The reunion will be hosted by Class '51, the golden jubilarians, together with Class '76, the silver jubilarians.

Associate Justice Raoul V. Victorino of the Sandiganbayan, chair of the Golden Jubilarians Class '51, said the speech of Vice President Guingona, the guest of honor, will highlight the whole-day celebrations. Other details of the affair may be obtained from tel. nos. 640-3441; 951-4580; 631-4614 and 411-1662.

MMDA abolition hot in the streets

(From page A23)

Makati Rep. Agapito "Butz" Aquino told reporters in Makati the other day that the proposed law filed by Valenzuela Rep. Magtanggol Gunigundo III meant to abolish the MMDA is already "under calendar."

More importantly, Aquino, who has been meeting with other Metro Manila congressmen on the issue, said that there is a prevailing sentiment "for the abolition" of the MMDA.

"Right now, more than half of the congressmen agree (to the MMDA's abolition). Eventually, we might get all (of them). It is a near unanimous sentiment," Aquino said. He added that fellow Makati Rep. Teodoro "Teddyboy" Locsin is also in favor of the move.

He explained that Metro Manila congressmen meet regularly on issues affecting their areas and constituents. "The biggest problem now is garbage and traffic, both of which are not being addressed."

To address the garbage problem, for example, Aquino suggested that a "garbage commissioner" be appointed to finally "get the job done."

The Metro Manila congressmen are trying to get the support of the Metro mayors to abolish the MMDA, Aquino bared.

He also dismissed the suggestion that the MMDA be "strengthened" rather than abolished. "You don't strengthen something that has not been proven to be effective," Aquino quipped.

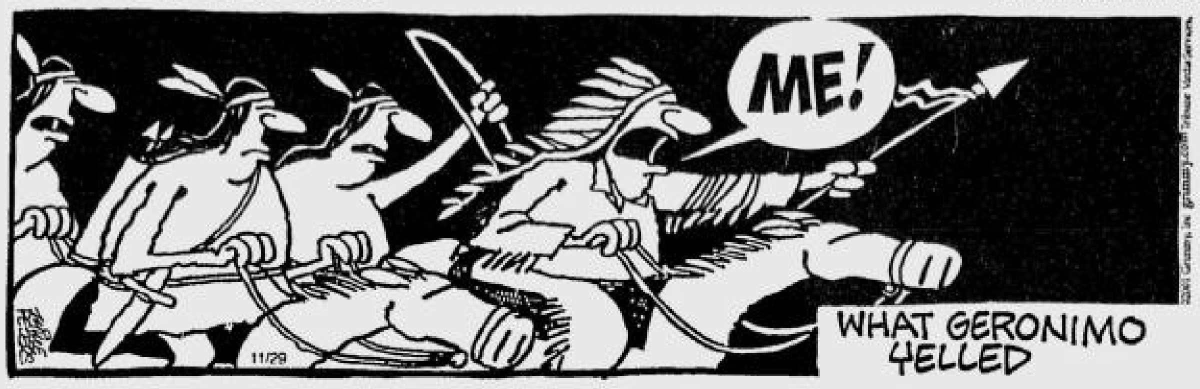
Last week, Manila Mayor Lito Atienza suggested that the MMDA be strengthened and transformed into a stronger agency with the powers and functions of an autonomous region.

MMDA chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. also said the agency should be strengthened for it to be able to effectively deliver its services. Particularly, Abalos said some of its functions like flood management and sewerage control should be devolved to the Metro mayors so the agency can concentrate on garbage and traffic.

Congress is conducting hearings on whether or not the MMDA should be abolished and replaced with another body. Valenzuela City Rep. Magtanggol Gunigundo Jr. was the first lawmaker to call for MMDA's abolition in 1999.

MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

BY MIKE PETERS


ME!
WHAT GERONIMO YELLED
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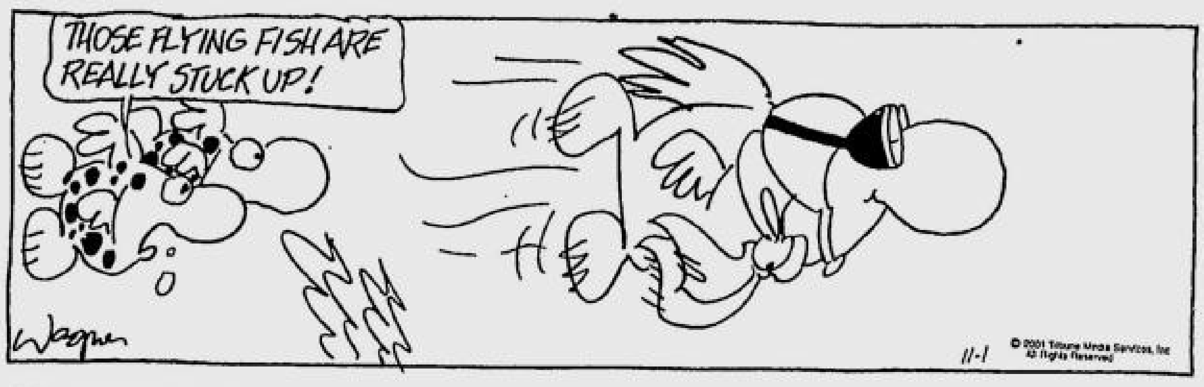
ANIMAL CRACKER

BY FRED WAGNER


THOSE FLYING FISH ARE REALLY STUCK UP!
Wagner
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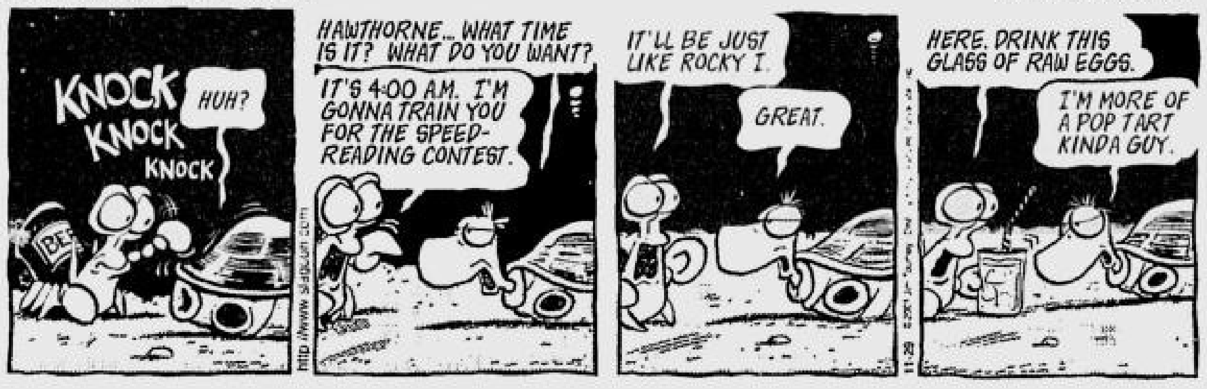
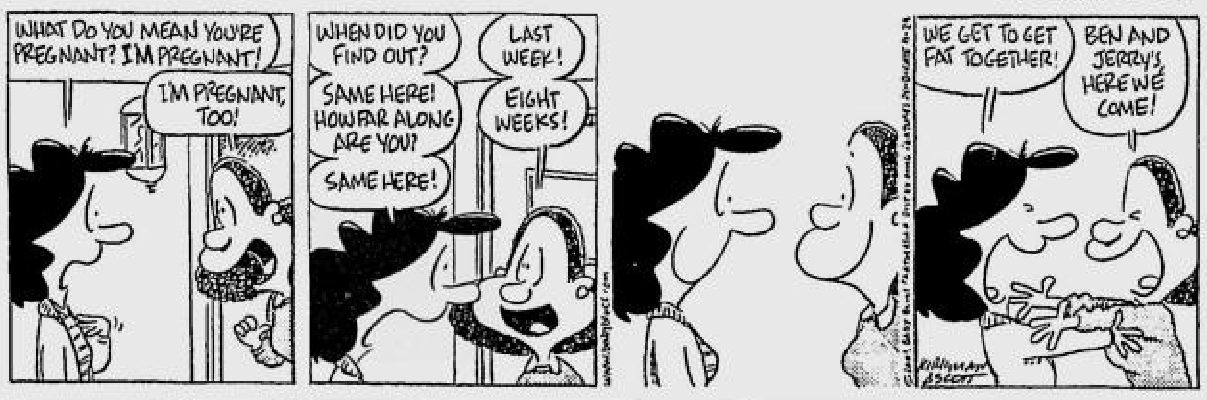
SHERMAN'S LAGOON

BY JIM TOOMEY


KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK
HUH?
HAWTHORNE... WHAT TIME IS IT? WHAT DO YOU WANT?
IT'S 4:00 AM. I'M GONNA TRAIN YOU FOR THE SPEED-READING CONTEST.
IT'LL BE JUST LIKE ROCKY I.
GREAT.
HERE. DRINK THIS GLASS OF RAW EGGS.
I'M MORE OF A POP TART KINDA GUY.
11-28

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU'RE PREGNANT? I'M PREGNANT!
I'M PREGNANT, TOO!
WHEN DID YOU FIND OUT?
LAST WEEK!
SAME HERE! HOW FAR ALONG ARE YOU?
EIGHT WEEKS!
SAME HERE!
WE GET TO GET FAT TOGETHER!
BEN AND JERRY'S, HERE WE COME!
KIRKMAN ASCOTT

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Diane Ladd, Chuck Mangione, Garry Shandling, Kim Delaney, Joel Coen, Howie Mandel

Happy Birthday: You have so much to offer this year. Don't let personal frustration hamper your performance. You can outshine any competition. Focus on surpassing past goals and accomplishments. Your sweetest revenge will be success. Your numbers: 10, 17, 22, 29, 34, 48.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): You'll find your groove today. You'll be an entertaining showstopper and attract a lot of attention. Dinner with clients or business associates will be successful.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): An older relative or friend may ask you to handle a pressing matter. Don't waste time fretting or pondering this dilemma. Take the initiative and deal with it quickly.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Make an effort today. If you have to deal with large institutions, be careful not to make waves. A visit to a friend or relative who hasn't been feeling up to par will lift his or her spirits.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Networking could lead to a prosperous connection. At intellectual or cultural groups, you will meet stimulating individuals. Get out even if you feel like staying home.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): You must atone for ignoring or neglecting someone recently. You can get your relationship back on track by compromising.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Your talents will be discovered if you show them off. Don't be too shy to promote your own interests. You can learn from those who have had similar experiences.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Check on a relative who really can't manage alone anymore. Make any necessary changes to his or her personal papers. There may be a problem with a will or an insurance policy.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Don't give up or surrender to ideas that you don't agree with. If you voice your opinions to groups you belong to, they will support you. Don't be afraid of opposition; your suggestions are valid.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Don't promise too much to outsiders. It's time to focus on yourself and your family.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): You have so much potential. Creative projects can enhance your earning power. With your ability to motivate others, you can rally support.

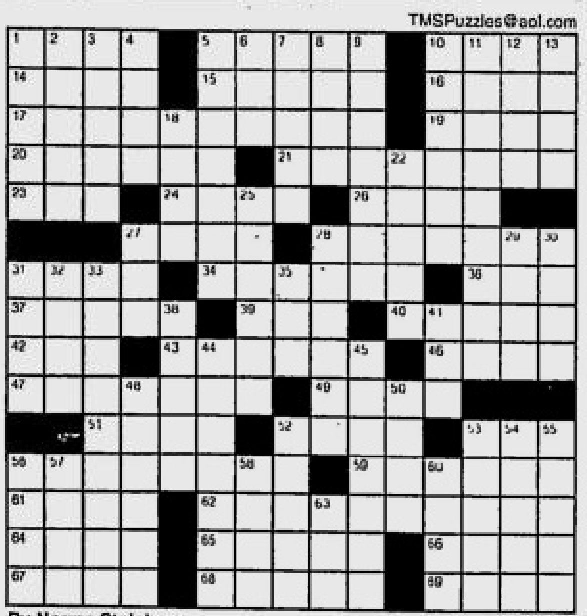
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): It's time to kick back and enjoy entertaining conversation with friends. You stand to make money if you are inventive. Consider real estate. Involvement in sports or entertainment will lead to romance.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): There will be no sitting at home feeling lonely. Take the initiative to join a group and meet other people with similar interests.

Birthday Baby: You have so much to offer. You are lovable, caring and a real trooper at getting things done. You will take on any challenge, determined to be successful.

DAILY CROSSWORD

TMSPuzzles@aol.com



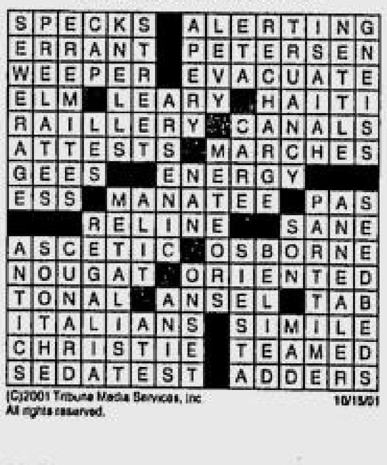
By Norma Steinberg
San Francisco, CA

10/15/01

ACROSS
1 Woe is me
5 Embers
10 Part of B.A.
14 Rational
15 Accounts inspection
16 "Two Mules for Sister __"
17 Far-reaching
19 Created, as a cocoon
20 Beast
21 Land and the buildings on it
23 Born in Bordeaux?
24 Slug ending?
26 Snack
27 Miguel's coin
28 Cocktail dash
31 Mulgrew of "Star Trek: Voyager"
34 Mate
36 Needle hole
37 Modify for new use
39 Possesses
40 Beelzebub
42 Tibetan beast
43 John and Bonnie
46 Money __ everything!
47 "The Bartered Bride" composer
49 "Das __ von der Erde"
51 Voucher
52 Fast period
53 Lincoln or Burrows
56 Winter wheel
59 Tree knots
61 Vesuvian flow
62 Party pooper
64 Declare with certainty
65 Hit by the Rolling Stones
66 Pitchfork prong
67 Bouncy
68 Haley book
69 Remnants

DOWN
1 Egyptian dam
2 Frankie or Cleo
3 Actress MacDowell
4 Appear to be
5 Lacking a lid
6 Thornton Wilder play, "__ Town"
7 Expert
8 Baloney manufacturer?
9 Choreographer Ruth
10 Help out
11 Police records
12 Factual
13 Without: Fr.
18 Out of danger
22 Jots
25 Loren of "The Black Orchid"
27 Energy
28 Move busily
29 Jeri of "Star Trek: Voyager"
30 Transmitted
31 Kyser and Lenz
32 Dalgliesh of P.D. James
33 Find shelter
35 Livestock tidbit
38 Characteristic
41 Lend a hand
44 Dovish
45 Unmarried people
48 Effectively oppose
50 Sicilian volcano
52 Release
53 Alan or Adam
54 Amalgamation
55 Sen. Kefauver
56 Smack
57 Central part of a church
58 Clinton's A.G.
60 Feed the kitty
63 Took the bait

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER



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E	R	R	A	N	T	■	P	E	T	E	R	S	E	N
W	E	E	P	E	R	■	E	V	A	C	U	A	T	E
E	L	M	■	L	E	A	R	Y	■	H	A	I	T	I
R	A	I	L	L	E	R	Y	■	C	A	N	A	L	S
A	T	T	E	S	T	S	■	M	A	R	C	H	E	S
G	E	E	S	■	■	E	N	E	R	G	Y	■	■	■
E	S	S	■	M	A	N	A	T	E	E	■	P	A	S
■	■	■	R	E	L	I	N	E	■	■	S	A	N	E
A	S	C	E	T	I	C	■	O	S	B	O	R	N	E
N	O	U	G	A	T	■	O	R	I	E	N	T	E	D
T	O	N	A	L	■	A	N	S	E	L	■	T	A	B
I	T	A	L	I	A	N	S	■	S	I	M	I	L	E
C	H	R	I	S	T	I	E	■	T	E	A	M	E	D
S	E	D	A	T	E	S	T	■	A	D	D	E	R	S

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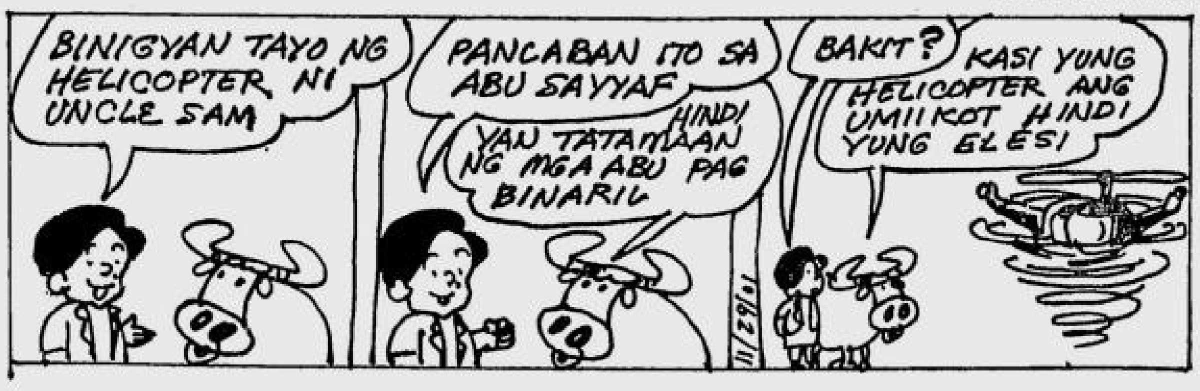
10/15/01

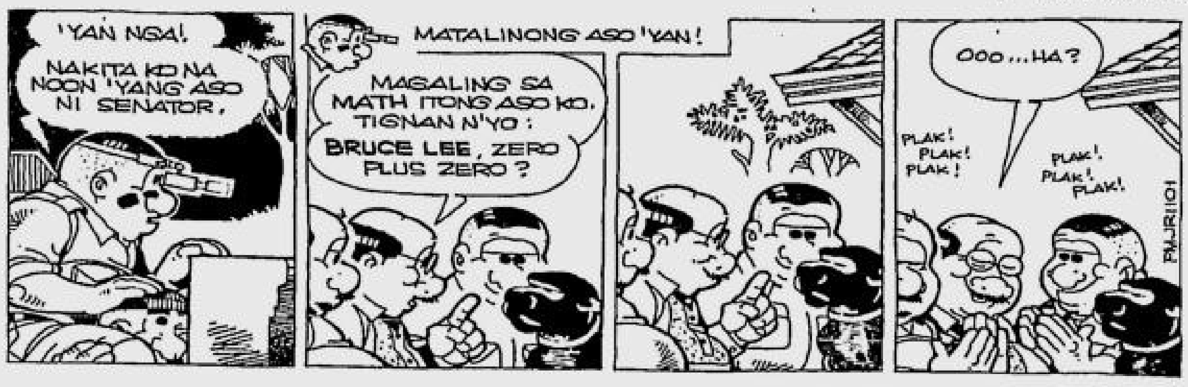
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


BINIGYAN TAYO NG HELICOPTER NI UNCLE SAM
PANGABAN ITO SA ABU SAYYAF
HINDI YAN TATAMAAN NG MGA ABU PAG BINARIL
11/29/01
BAKIT?
KASI YUNG HELICOPTER ANG UMIIKOT HINDI YUNG ELESI

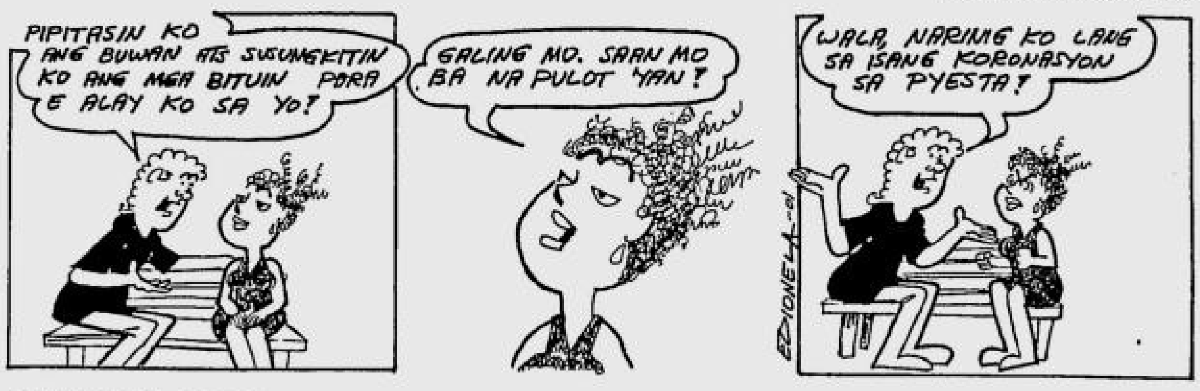
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


'YAN NGA!
NAKITA KO NA NOON 'YANG ASO NI SENATOR.
MATALINONG ASO 'YAN!
MAGALING SA MATH ITONG ASO KO. TIGNAN N'YO : BRUCE LEE, ZERO PLUS ZERO ?
OOO...HA?
PLAK! PLAK! PLAK!
PLAK! PLAK! PLAK!
PMJR1101

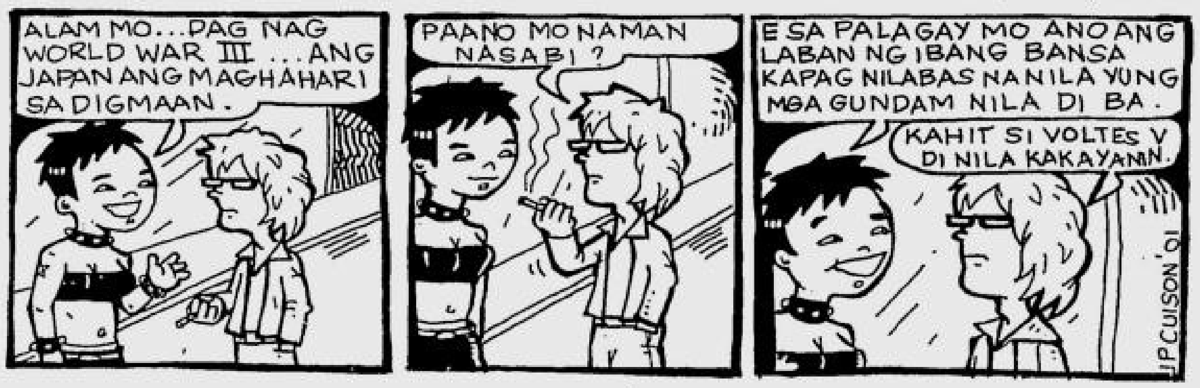
SIMO

BY EDGAR DIONELA


PIPITASIN KO ANG BUWAN ATS SUSUNGKITIN KO ANG MGA BITUIN PARA E ALAY KO SA YO!
GALING MO. SAAN MO BA NA PULOT 'YAN?
EDIONELA-01
WALA, NARINIG KO LANG SA ISANG KORONASYON SA PYESTA!

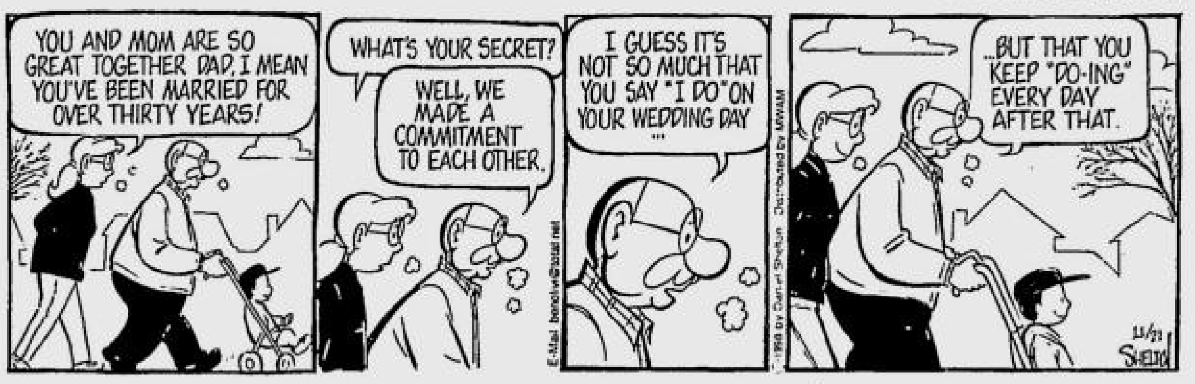
GARAPATA BLOOD

BY JOHN PAUL/BENG/MANIX


ALAM MO...PAG NAG WORLD WAR III ...ANG JAPAN ANG MAGHAHARI SA DIGMAAN.
PAANO MO NAMAN NASABI ?
E SA PALAGAY MO ANO ANG LABAN NG IBANG BANSA KAPAG NILABAS NA NILA YUNG MGA GUNDAM NILA DI BA.
KAHIT SI VOLTES V DI NILA KAKAYANIN.
JP CUISON '01

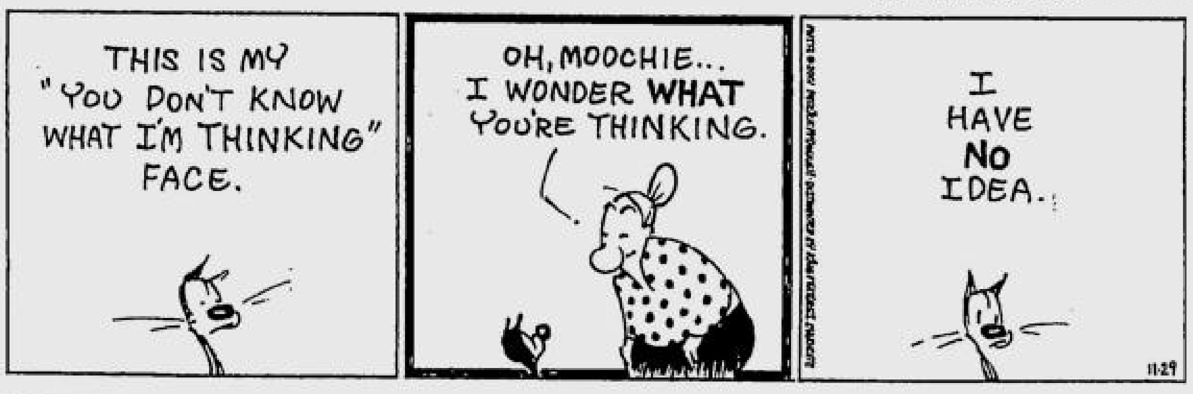
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


YOU AND MOM ARE SO GREAT TOGETHER DAD, I MEAN YOU'VE BEEN MARRIED FOR OVER THIRTY YEARS!
WHAT'S YOUR SECRET?
WELL, WE MADE A COMMITMENT TO EACH OTHER.
I GUESS IT'S NOT SO MUCH THAT YOU SAY "I DO" ON YOUR WEDDING DAY ...
...BUT THAT YOU KEEP "DO-ING" EVERY DAY AFTER THAT.
SHELTON

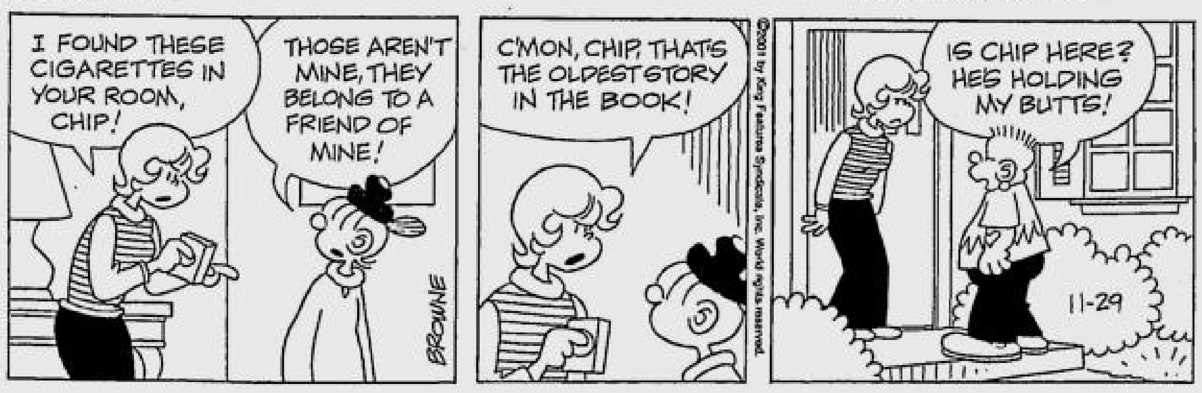
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


THIS IS MY "YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M THINKING" FACE.
OH, MOOCHIE... I WONDER WHAT YOU'RE THINKING.
I HAVE NO IDEA.
11-29

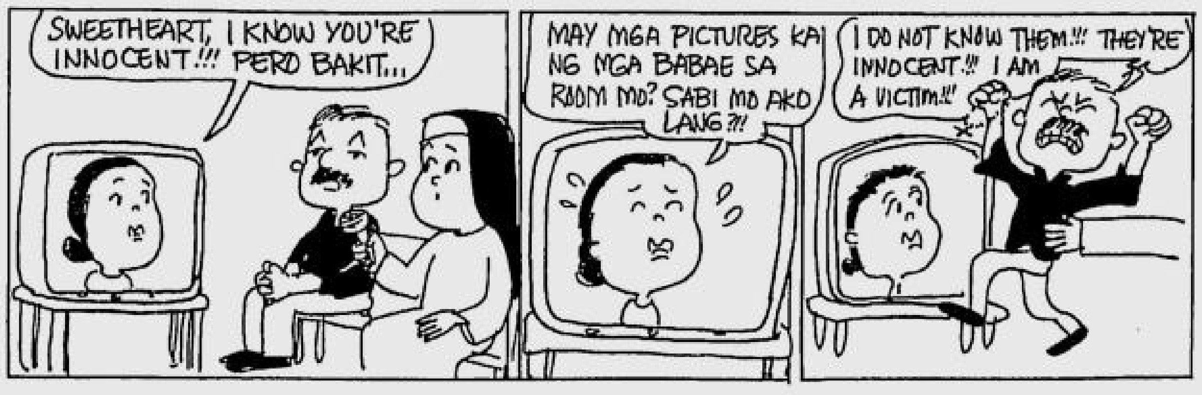
HI AND LOIS

BY BRIAN & GREG WALKER


I FOUND THESE CIGARETTES IN YOUR ROOM, CHIP!
THOSE AREN'T MINE, THEY BELONG TO A FRIEND OF MINE!
BROWNE
C'MON, CHIP, THAT'S THE OLDEST STORY IN THE BOOK!
IS CHIP HERE? HE'S HOLDING MY BUTTS!
11-29

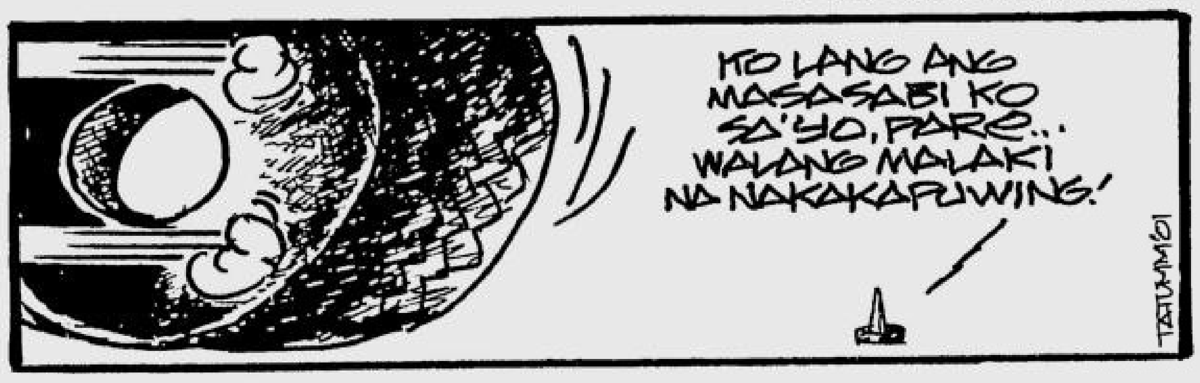
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


SWEETHEART, I KNOW YOU'RE INNOCENT!!! PERO BAKIT...
MAY MGA PICTURES KA NG MGA BABAE SA ROOM MO? SABI MO AKO LANG?!!
I DO NOT KNOW THEM!!! THEY'RE INNOCENT!!! I AM A VICTIM!!!

TULDOK

BY PAPU & TATUM MILAMBILING


ITO LANG ANG MASASABI KO SA'YO, PARE... WALANG MALAKI NA NAKAKAPUWING!
TATUM'01

Has Vic Sotto finally found his someone in Marla?

DOLLYWOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

LOOKS like **Vic Sotto** has finally found his match.

Someone privy to Vic's affairs revealed that he is really head over heels in love with his girlfriend **Marla.** They are often seen playing billiards at Astrobowl Magallanes till way past midnight.

One sure sign that Vic is truly smitten is that he begged off from joining the "Eat Bulaga" group in Hong Kong because Marla could not come along. She's the one who gives him a wake-up call every morning so that he would make it to "Eat Bulaga" on time.

Marla is the last person Vic calls before he goes to bed at night. Vic is a genuinely nice guy and it's about time his hyperactive heart stayed in its rightful place.

Now it's our turn to ask Vic: *Laban o bawi* when it comes to loving Marla?

PDA

MIRRIAM Quiambao was caught off-guard when **Hans Montenegro** said he had always wanted to be stranded on an island with McGyver until he met Miriam. She blushed uncontrollably and almost forgot her next spiel when they hosted the Araw Awards at the advertising congress.

Some kind of PDA, huh? As in Public Declaration of *Amor*. Other guys better keep their hands off Miriam.

The other awards host, **Paolo Bediones**, who used to be paired with Miriam, teased Hans and Miriam. For the longest time, Paolo was being pinpointed as the cause of Miriam's split-up with her former boyfriend but he has proven that the rumors were unfounded.

Miriam and Hans surely look good together. I only hope the future of their romance will be good as well.

Not living together

WHEN I spotted Paolo Bediones from afar at the

Mandarin and he looked my way, I hid behind a post in jest. I thought he would reprimand me for printing an e-mail from a reader (who lives in the same village where he does) who insists that Paolo and Maxine were living together.

When Paolo approached me, I kidded him: "I wrote that just to catch your attention because you have not been calling me lately. I feel like getting jealous! Ha-ha!"

He gave me a big hug and said, "You know me. I would tell you if it were true. I'm used to rumors already. I'm just worried for Maxine because she's still new so she gets affected. I pity her because her family is in Canada so for her sake, please clarify that we are not living together. We just happen to have the same manager, that's why we're usually together."

Come to think of it, I was one of the first people he opened up to when he was about to court **Sandra "Lumen" Gomez**, so I see no reason why he would hide things from me now.

Twilo's first

TWILO in Libis will be celebrating its first anniversary on Friday, Nov. 30. Sponsored by Jose Cuervo Tequila, cocktails for friends and VIPs start at 10 p.m. If you have not been to Twilo, then you must be uncool. Catch you there. Let's party till dawn do us part!

Personal

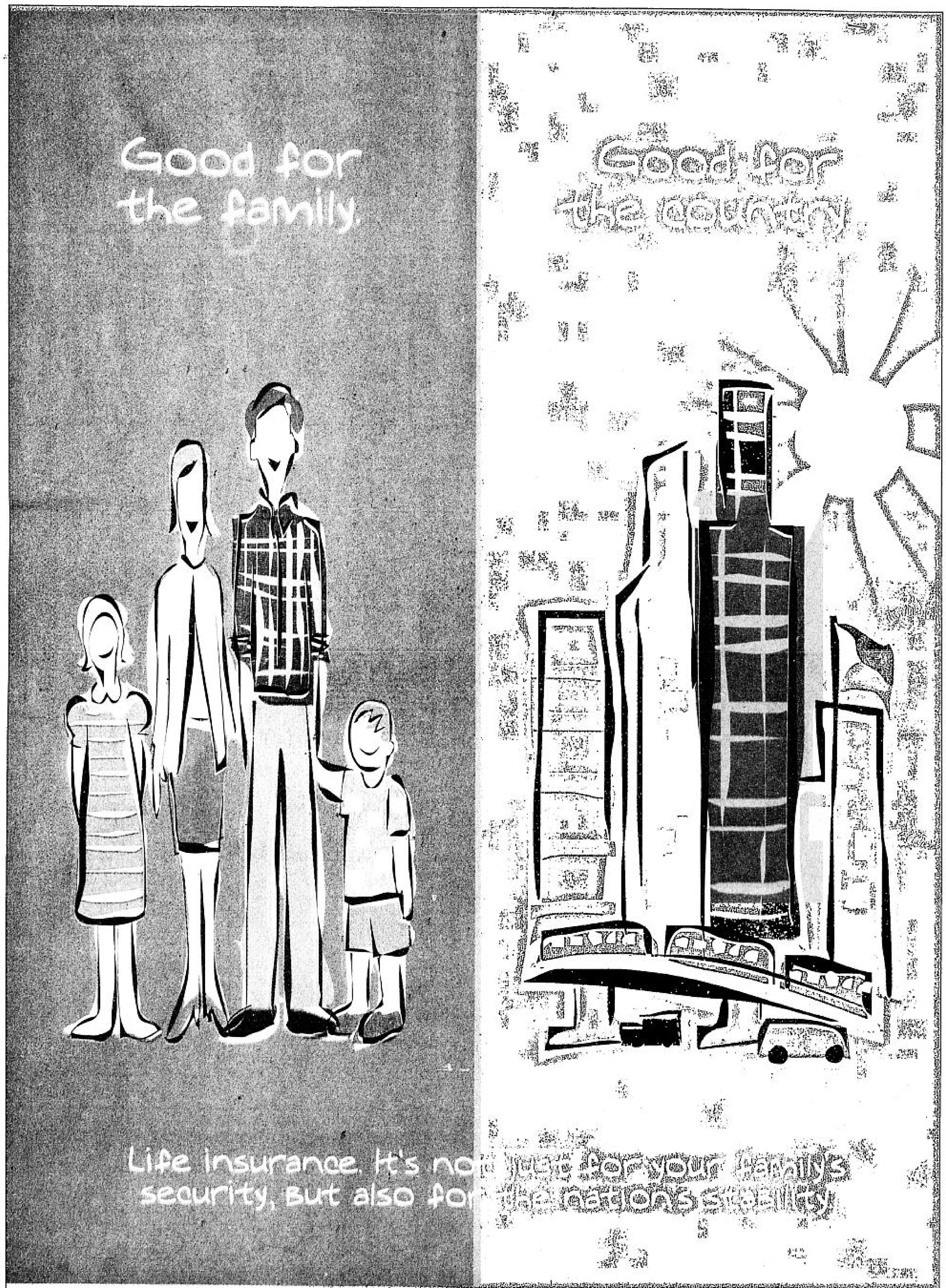
THANKS more than I can ever say to **Ernie Pugoan** and **Remy Ceniza** of Camp John Hay for a heavenly stay in Baguio. Kindness is in everything you do.

Many thanks also to **William Andaya** of Yamsky Grill and Bar and the rest of Malolos Lions Club for making me feel instantly at home. You guys are the coolest.

Happy Birthday to someone who will always occupy one ventricle in my heart, **Dukie Villavert.**

For feedback, e-mail wateringhole2000@yahoo.com

BEDIONES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GMA 7 game show produces 4 millionaires

NOW that the game show craze in the country has reached fever-pitch, the time has come to separate the pretenders from the real thing.

Since "Korek na Korek Ka D'yan" was launched on Nov. 5, the show has undeniably put the money where its mouth is and has consistently delivered what it promised, *"Mas malaki ang premyo. Mas madaling sumali, Mas masaya."*

"Korek na Korek Ka D'yan" is the only show among the many now on television that fulfills its promise again and again. Barely two weeks after GMA launched the game show which has its finger firmly on the pulse of the Filipino masses, Korek Na Korek Ka D'yan has produced four millionaires.

Crisjun Ced's ultimate dream was to put his three kids through college and he knew it won't be a walk in the park with his work in construction. Little did he know that his fate would change drastically last Nov. 14.

This timekeeper from Novaliches found himself opposite Vic Sotto, answering the million-peso question that would forever alter the lives of his entire family. Then imagine the reaction of his home partner, Corazon Mijares, as she watched in her home in Payatas stunned, knowing all too well that she too had just won a million bucks.

Ericson Barroquillo of Pandacan dreamed of owning a house-and-lot, a luxury that remains elusive for most Filipinos.

Only three days after Ced and Mijares won, Barroquillo and Aniceto Banggay, his home partner from Caloocan, can hardly believe they have also joined the ranks of Filipino millionaires.

These four new big spenders are proof positive that among all game shows, "Korek na Korek Ka D'yan" is indeed the easiest way to easy street.

"Korek na Korek Ka D'yan" airs Mondays to Fridays at 7:30 p.m. and Saturdays at 6:30 p.m. on GMA.

"KOREK na Korek Ka D'yan" hosts Vic Sotto (left) and Joey de Leon congratulate new millionaire Ericson Barroquillo.

Live comedy bar opens in Las Piñas

SITCOM Live! Comedy Bar opens at 6 tonight along Alabang-Zapote Road in Las Piñas City (corner Doña Manuela Avenue beside RFC Supermarket).

The owners of Sitcom Live! Comedy Bar believe in the adage, "laughter is the best medicine."

The reason they decided to put up an entertainment bar in the vicinity is to give haven to tired and restless souls at night.

Good food and live entertainment are what Sitcom Live! Comedy Bar offers to their guests.

The Raging Divas will perform live at the opening. Special guest to cut the ceremonial ribbon is Las Piñas Mayor Nene Aguilar, with celebrities from tinseltown.

DJ Nelson will provide the music.

Library talents Fatluck (Eva, La Bacci and Maria), Al Arayata, Phillip Lazaro and Hans Mortel will also perform

Consultant of Sitcom Live! is Andrew de Real, himself a sing-along bar owner of the Library.

RAGING Divas perform during tonight's opening.

Lively contestants on 'Family Feud'

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

LAST Nov. 19 at 8 p.m., ABC 5 telecast the premiere episode of its second new game show, "Family Feud," with **Ogie Alcasid** as gamemaster.

Alcasid was a good choice to put the show and its contestants through their paces, because he was able to combine a sense of authority and a lighthearted hosting style.

The first telecast's two families, the Banataos and the Saysons, were also well-chosen on point of appeal and their ability to come up with fast answers.

More, they had the knack required by the show to second-guess what 100 survey respondents would answer about questions involving general behavior. To us, this is the interesting thing about the show, that it gives us a view of average people's preferences and behavioral patterns.

The first question was particularly interesting: What bad habit did most Filipinos want to rid themselves of? Some of the correct answers were: smoking, drinking, gambling, lying, tardiness, the mañana habit—and womanizing.

The second question (what food do most Filipinos like putting ketchup on?) wasn't as telling, but some of the answers were amusingly far-out.

When the third question was asked (what do most men wear when they're going to bed at night?), the show turned a little naughty. The big surprise was one of the answers that nobody got: socks! One hoped that wasn't all that the men wore when they went to sleep!

The "survey says" quizzes were entertaining and informative enough, but the cash prizes seemed rather modest, especially when compared to the million-peso pots on other game or quiz programs.

Still, "Family Feud" seems to be more appropriate for local viewers than "Wheel of Fortune," because family relationships are important in these parts.

Incidentally, some viewers aren't convinced that 100 people are really polled on the the survey questions asked on the show. They think that it's the shows writers who come up with the preferences that the contestants have to guess, in order to win in the show's various rounds.

To put such doubts to rest, the program should show video footage on how it conducts its audience-preference surveys, the individuals who are interviewed, the specific answers they give, how those answers are tabulated, etc.

The high point in every "Family Feud" telecast is its jackpot round, where a member of the winning family is asked a series of questions about people's preferences in a wide range of fields, with the jackpot being awarded if the family representative and a second member can make 150 points.

This is the exciting part because it's tough to go from one field to another as the clock keeps ticking, so when the jackpot is won, it's a big triumph that is celebrated by winning contestants and viewers alike.

'Hiroshima, Mon Amour'

THE 2001 Cinemanila filmfest will screen acclaimed experimental films like **Alain Resnais'** 1954 art movie, "Hiroshima, Mon Amour."

In the film, a French actress making an antiwar movie in Hiroshima meets and makes love to a Japanese architect. The next evening, they have a rendezvous at his home while his wife is away. She, too, admits that she's married.

After they make love, they go to a riverside tea room and she tells him the story of her life: She had a love affair with a German-soldier who was later killed. She had her head shaved by irate townspeople, and went mad when her shamed parents locked her in a cellar.

She gets hysterical and the architect has to slap her. In a few hours, she will be flying home.

FREE VITAMINS

Kiddie Pharmaton, the multi-vitamin prescribed for children worldwide, treated moviegoers to free samples during last weekend's run of the blockbuster, "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone," at Robinson's Galleria and Glorietta 4. Kiddie Pharmaton is distributed by Boehringer Ingelheim (Phil.) Inc.

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ANIME-INSPIRED GAME SHOW

Enjoy trivia games? Like anime? Then you'll love Timosuko, Enchanted Kingdom's very own anime-inspired game show. Joining is so easy! On Dec 1, 8, 15, 29, and Jan 5, just buy a tumbler worth P50, then go to the Launch Pad where the fun awaits. Up to 1,000 people can join, only one will make it to the final showdown where bigger prizes are at stake -- up to P25,000 in cash plus exciting prizes! We guarantee, there isn't another game show quite like this!

Enchanted Kingdom

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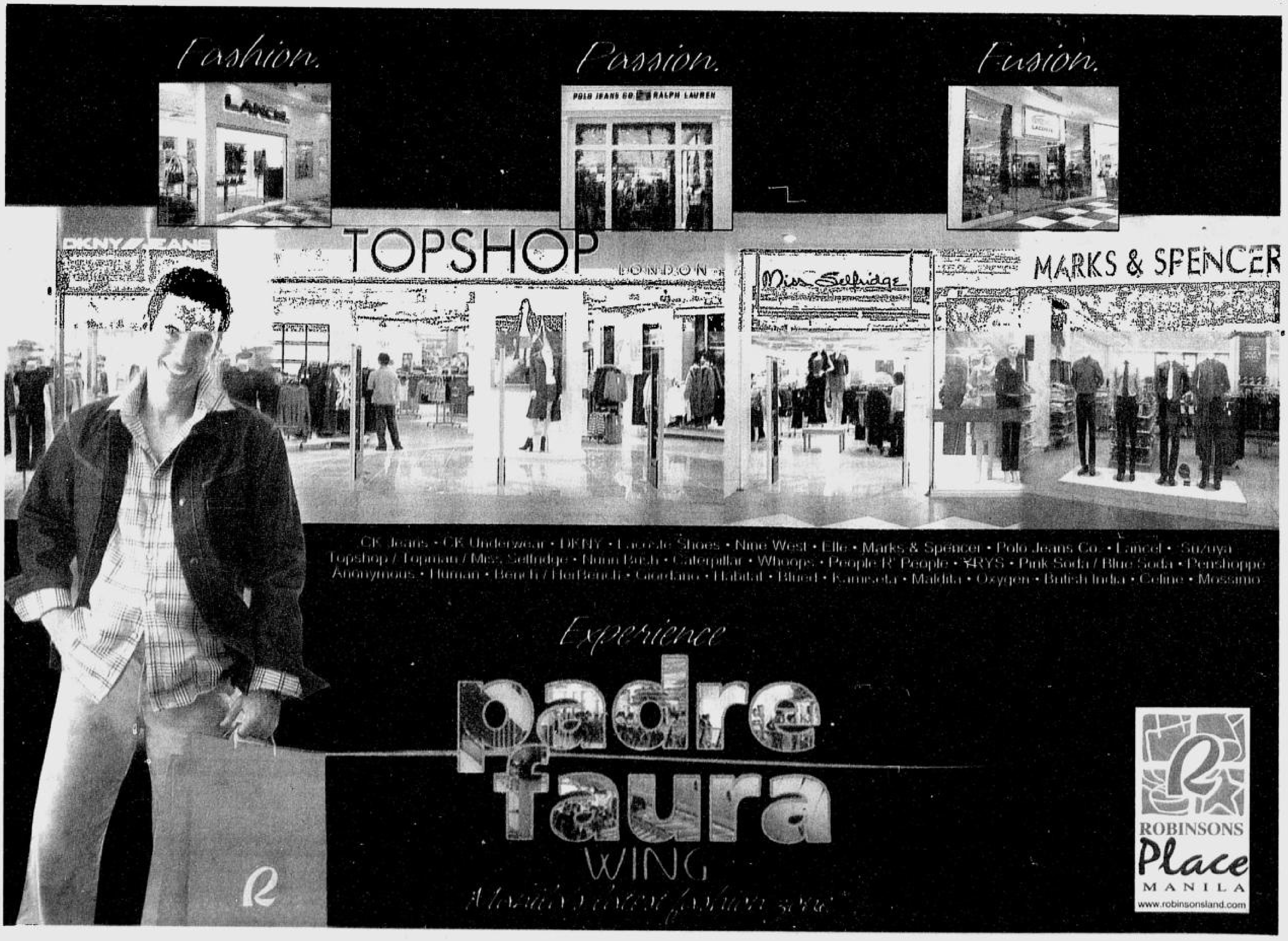
Ticket also available at all Ticketworld outlets: National Bookstore Branches • Tower Records (Makati, Alabang) • Robinson's Department Stores (Galleria, Manila)



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4	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
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7	ANO BANG MERON KA?
8	WEYT A MINIT
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11	TIKIM
12	PAGDATING NG PANAHON

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6	HARRY POTTER
7	THE ONE
8	WEYT A MINIT
9	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
10	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
11	ANO BANG MERON KA?
12	TIKIM

SM TUTUBAN
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2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
4	PAGDATING NG PANAHON

DIGITAL dts SOUND · DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
9295452

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	HARRY POTTER
3	TIKIM
4	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
5	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
6	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
7	HARRY POTTER
8	MONSTERS, INC
9	WEYT A MINIT
10	ANO BANG MERON KA?
11	HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
12	SERENDIPITY

SM SOUTHMALL
8066888

1	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
2	HARRY POTTER
3	MONSTERS, INC
4	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
5	WEYT A MINIT
6	SERENDIPITY
7	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
8	HARRY POTTER
9	HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
10	TIKIM

SM GUADALUPE COMM'L
8820905

1	TIKIM
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW

SM CEBU
2313676

1	HARRY POTTER
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3	SERENDIPITY
4	SAKIM
5	KING OF GLADIATORS
6	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
7	MONSTERS, INC.

SM ILOILO
3209422

1	SERENDIPITY
2	CLOSED
3	HARRY POTTER
4	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
5	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
6	MONSTERS, INC
7	CLOSED
8	HAYOP SA SEX APPEAL

SM PAMPANGA
7128015

1	HARRY POTTER
2	MONSTERS, INC.
3	WEYT A MINIT
4	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
5	CAPT. CORRELLI'S
6	PAGDATING NG PANAHON

SM SUCAT
8294975

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	MONSTERS, INC.
3	HARRY POTTER
4	PAGDATING NG PANAHON

SM DAVAO

1	MONSTERS, INC.
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3	KAPITAN AMBO
4	HARRY POTTER
5	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
6	CAPT. CORRELLI'S

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2	HARRY POTTER	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3	TIKIM	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
4	PAGDATING NG PANAHON	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND

GLORIETTA 4

1	HARRY POTTER	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3	HARRY POTTER THX	In DSD/SDDS/DTS DIGITAL SOUND
4	THE OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND
5	GLITTER	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
6	MONSTER, INC.	In DTS/SDDS DIGITAL SOUND
7	SERENDIPITY	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND

Art Film

GREENBELT

1	MONSTER, INC.	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON	In SONY DYNAMIC DIGITAL SOUND
3	HARRY POTTER	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
4	REGINE AT THE MOVIES NOV. 30 / DEC. 1, 7, 8, 15, 16, 21, 22, 28, 29, 30 Onstage	

ALABANG TOWN CENTER

1	HARRY POTTER THX	In DSD/SDDS DIGITAL SOUND
2	MONSTER, INC.	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3	MONSTER, INC.	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND
4	HARRY POTTER	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND
5	PAGDATING NG PANAHON	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND

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MOVIE GUIDE

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1 (DDS)	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
2 (SDDS)	MONSTER, INC.
3 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER
4 GOLD (DTS)	HARRY POTTER
5 GOLD (DOLBY)	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
6 GOLD (SDDS)	MONSTER, INC.
7 GOLD (DOLBY)	HARRY POTTER
8	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
9	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
10	SERENDIPITY

Pearl Plaza Cinemas
(Parañaque) tel. 853.4486

1	
2	
3 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER
4	TIKIM
5	
6 (DTS)	
Golden Pearl THX	

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 831.6603

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	HARRY POTTER
3	TIKIM

starmall Movies
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1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	HARRY POTTER
3	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	MONSTERS, INC.
5	TIKIM

METROPOLIS star
543.3927 loc. 150

1	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
2	HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
3	TIKIM
4	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
5	MONSTERS, INC.
6	HARRY POTTER
7	RESERVE
8	RESERVE

PREMIERE CINEMA THX
(Makati City) tel 751.2011 to13

1	MONSTERS, INC.

Center Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1	THE ONE
2	WEYT A MINIT

FCM FAIRVIEW CENTER MALL, INC.
tel 930.9515

1	TIKIM
2	MONSTERS, INC.
3	PAGDATING NG PANAHON

Spring
(Libertad, Pasay City) tel 831.7864

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
A	TIKIM

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376

1	HARRY POTTER
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3	TIKIM
4	MONSTERS, INC.

GOTESCO CINEMA

City
(Manila) tel 734.8588

1 (DOLBY)	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	RESERVE
3	RESERVE
4	TIKIM
5	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
6	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
7 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER
8 (SDDS)	MONSTERS, INC.
9 (DOLBY)	HARRY POTTER

Caloocan
tel 362.3508

2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON

Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364.3781

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3	TIKIM
4 (SDDS)	MONSTERS, INC.
5	HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
6 (DOLBY)	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
7 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER
8	WEYT A MINIT
9	KAPITAN AMBO

Commonwealth
tel 951.0083

1 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3	TIKIM
4	HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
5 (SDDS)	MONSTERS, INC.
6	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
7 (DOLBY)	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
8	WEYT A MINIT

Ortigas
tel 656.6795

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	TIKIM
3 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER
4	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
5 (SDDS)	MONSTERS, INC

Universal
(Manila) tel 733.2470

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON

Sampaguita
(Cubao) tel 911.7888

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON

Dilson
(Manila) tel 734.7724

Dilson	SEDUCE
Lords	OBSESSION
Jennet	

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tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1	
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3	TIKIM

Prima
(Pasig) tel 641.1215

3	PAGDATING NG PANAHON

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
SUPER CINERAMA
tel 733.4238

1 (DOLBY)	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	MONSTERS, INC.
3	RESERVE
4	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
5	TIKIM

New Divisoria Mall
DIVISORIA CINEMA
tel 244.4619

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	TIKIM
3	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
4	RESERVE
5	RESERVE
6	MONSTERS, INC

Baclaran LRT
LRT CINEMA
tel 512.0115

1 (DOLBY)	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	TIKIM

Berma
tel 879.2029

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	TIKIM

CitiMall
(Parañaque) tel 820.7269

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	TIKIM

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa Laguna)
tel (049) 534.2185 / 534.2198

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3 (DTS)	MONSTERS, INC

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2 (DTS)	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3 (DOLBY)	HARRY POTTER
4	MONSTERS, INC

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2 (DOLBY)	MONSTERS, INC
3 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER
4	PAGDATING NG PANAHON

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1	THE ONE
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3	SOON TO OPEN
4	SOON TO OPEN

Cinema 2000 MovieTown
(Tarlac)

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3 (DOLBY)	CAPT. CORRELLI'S
4 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.3276

1 (SDDS)	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
2	TIKIM
3	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
4 (DTS)	MONSTERS, INC

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	MONSTERS, INC
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER
4	KING OF GLADIATORS
5	DUGONG ASO

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3	MONSTERS, INC.

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249-2558

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	HARRY POTTER
3	MONSTERS, INC

Olivarez Tagaytay
tel (046) 413.0311

1	HARRY POTTER
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3	HAYOP SA SEX APPEAL

Morales Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.9736

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	MONSTERS, INC
3	HARRY POTTER

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4808

1 (DTS)	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2 (DTS)	DUGONG ASO

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1	DUGONG ASO
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3	HUWAG KANG KIKIBO

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	THE BODY
2	HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
3	HARRY POTTER
4	PAGDATING NG PANAHON

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 (DOLBY EX)	HARRY POTTER
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3	SOON TO OPEN
4 (DTS ES)	MONSTERS, INC

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3	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
4	MONSTER, INC.
5	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
6	MONSTER, INC.
7	HARRY POTTER
8	TIKIM
9	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
10	SERENDIPITY

ERMITA 536-7809 TO 12

1	MONSTER, INC.
2	HARRY POTTER
3	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
4	TIKIM
5	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
6	HARRY POTTER
7	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW

METRO EAST 632-9115-16 / 633-7541

1	HARRY POTTER
2	HARRY POTTER
3	TIKIM
4	TIKIM
5	OTHERSIDE OF THE LAW
6	MONSTER, INC.
7	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
8	PAGDATING NG PANAHON

NOVALICHES 936-3229 TO 31

1	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
2	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
3	MONSTER, INC.
4	MONSTER, INC.
5	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
6	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
7	TIKIM
8	HARRY POTTER

IMUS (046) 471-0199

1	HARRY POTTER
2	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
3	TIKIM
4	MONSTER, INC.
5	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
6	PAGDATING NG PANAHON

BACOLOD (034) 441-0453 / 0459

1	HARRY POTTER
2	SERENDIPITY
3	THE ONE
4	MONSTER, INC.
5	KAPITAN AMBO
6	DUGONG ASO

ILOILO (033) 336-0077 / 0079

1	HARRY POTTER
2	SERENDIPITY
3	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
4	MONSTER, INC.
5	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
6	MONSTER, INC.

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THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

ARANETA CENTER THEATERS 911-3101	
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-1	ANO BANG MERON KA?
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-2	KAPITAN AMBO
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-3 (DDS)	WEYT A MINIT
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-4 (SDDS)	HARRY POTTER
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-5 (DTS)	GLITTER
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-6 (DOLBY)	THE ONE
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-7(DOLBY)	EARTHQUAKE
FARMERS PLAZA-1(DOLBY)	HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
FARMERS PLAZA-2(DOLBY)	HARRY POTTER
FIESTA CARNIVAL	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
NEW FRONTIER	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	UNFAITHFUL WIFE / SEX MEDUSA
ODEON	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
ODEON-2	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
ROBEN	TIKIM
TANDEM-1	SEX MEDUSA
TANDEM-2	SEX EDUCATION
TIMES	CROCODILE / ST. FRANCIS VILLE
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	CLOSED
ACT-4	CLOSED
CORONET-2	ORIGINAL SIN
QUEZON-1	TIKIM
REMAR	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
REMAR-2	TIKIM
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
B	TIKIM
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
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STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
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CINEMA-2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
CINEMA-3	WEYT A MINIT
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	SERENDIPITY
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	MONSTER, INC.
CINEMA-6	TIKIM
CINEMA-7	ANO BANG MERON KA?
CINEMA-8	KAPITAN AMBO
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA-11(SDDS)	MONSTER, INC.
CINEMA-12	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
CINEMA-14	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
CINEMA-15	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
LORES	
CINEMA-2	CLOSED
CINEMA-3	CLOSED
POWER PLANT CINEMA	
CINEMA-1	SERENDIPITY
CINEMA-2	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA-3	MONSTERS, INC.
CINEMA-4	MONSTERS, INC.
CINEMA-5	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
CINEMA-6	HARRY POTTER
UNIWIDE METROMALL	
(LAS PIÑAS)	
CINEMA-1	
CINEMA-2	
CINEMA-4	
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARAÑAQUE)	
CINEMA-1	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
CINEMA-2	THE OTHER SIDE OF LOVE
CINEMA-4	ALAMID

ROMERO

Regal filmfest entry

REGAL Entertainment zeroes in at the box-office as it combines two of the aces in the past year's festival topgrossers.

"Bahay ni Lola" is a family drama and special effects production that topbills "Tanging Yaman" lead star Gloria Romero, under the helm of box-office director Uro Q. de la Cruz.

Gloria, who is one of the favorites of Regal matriarch Lily Monteverde, is the personal and only choice of the producer for the title role.

Gloria ran away with the best actress plum for her performance as the Alzheimer's disease-stricken matriarch whose children bitterly squabble over the family's fortunes in "Tanging Yaman." The film went on to be one of the filmfest's topgrossers.

Regal also renews creative ties with Roadrunner Network for the spectacular visual effects in "Bahay ni Lola," which comprise nearly one-third of the film.

Roadrunner created the visual effects in last year's festival topgrosser, Chito Roño's "Spirit Warriors," also produced by Regal.

De la Cruz is an acclaimed box-office writer-director known for groundbreaking films like "Sagad sa Init" and "Katayan" (which was invited to the recent Udina Film Festival in Italy).

On TV, De la Cruz is at the helm of high-tech viewing fares like "Beh Bote Nga," "Bubble Gang" and "Bitoy's World," all on GMA 7.

"Gloria Romero as the protective lola's ghost is the central character that holds the film together," De la Cruz explains. "She is the center of love because the film is not only purely horror and special effects.

"More than that, we wanted to come up with a film about what being a family is all about. We want to emphasize the values of loving, bonding and helping each other."

Starring with Gloria in "Bahay ni Lola" are Gina Alajar, Manilyn Reynes, Aiza Seguerra, Allan K, James Blanco, with child star Isabella, newcomer Maxene Magalona, Miko Sotto and Maybelline.

"Bahay ni Lola" is a possible Regal entry to this year's Metro Manila Film Festival.

MONTEVERDE

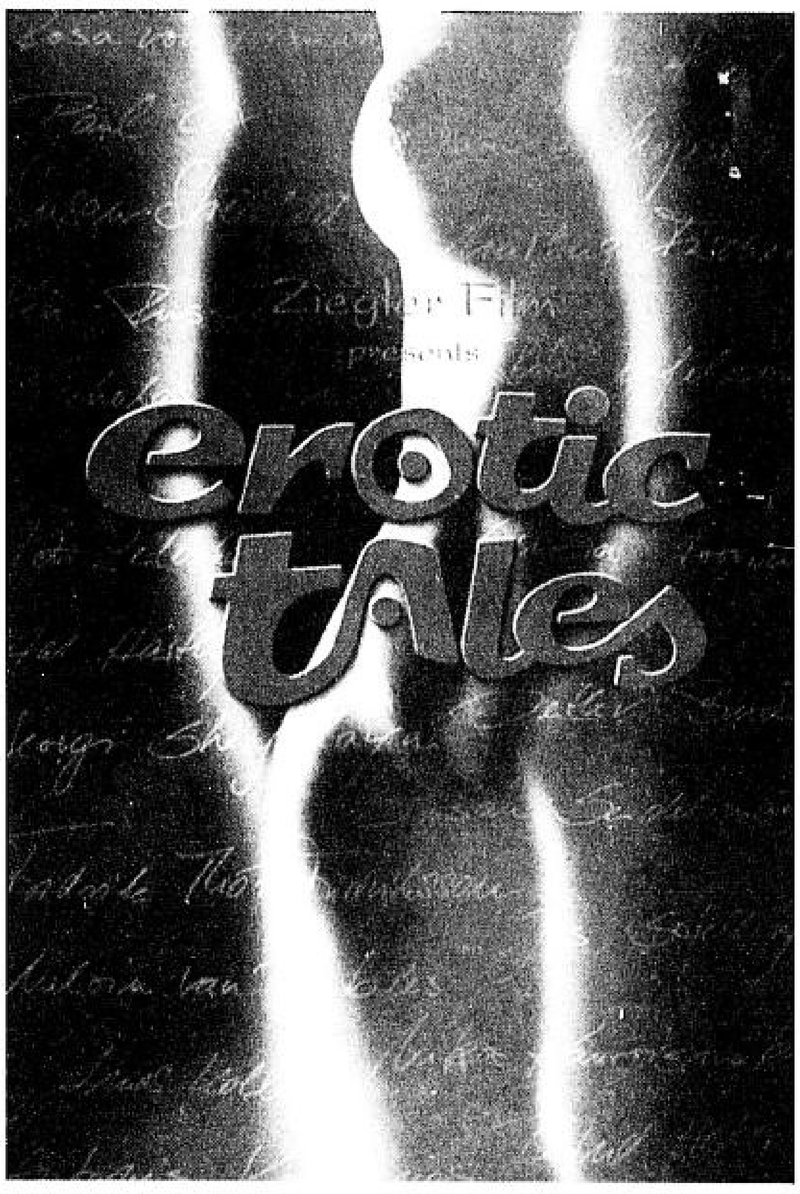
ENTERTAINMENT

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

'BIG LETDOWN'

MTRCB slammed for R-18 rating on Cinemanila film

By LEAH SALTERIO



"EROTIC Tales" by German filmmaker Regine Ziegler.

MAKATI Rep. Agapito "Butz" Aquino on Tuesday slammed the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board for giving a restricted rating to a German film that would be screened during the 3rd Cine-manila International Film Festival next month.

The censors gave an R-18 rating to Germany's "Erotic Tales," restricting the film only to viewers 18 years old and above.

"The MTRCB cannot distinguish between developmental work and commercial work," Aquino said. "Cinemanila screens movies that are being shown all over the world.

"We are trying to help the floundering cinema in the country by subsidizing Cinemanila. But if our own censors will disallow a film, that's a big letdown."

Objectionable

The MTRCB review committee found certain scenes objectionable in "Erotic Tales" and suggested that they be deleted.

But Cinemanila founder Tikoy Aguiluz said they are not authorized to delete any scene in any movie submitted for screening in the nine-day festival.

"Erotic Tales" is a series of short films by German producer Regine Ziegler.

"We either get an approval for exhibition or we don't show the film at all," Aguiluz said. "We don't have the license to alter any of the films."

Aquino pointed out Cinemanila could help the floundering local cinema regain lost ground and promote Filipino talents internationally.

"The cinema is a very powerful medium and it can propagate culture," Aquino said. "Our objective is to convince foreign producers to make movies here in the Philippines and give work even to our local talents and production crew.

"When (Francis Ford) Coppola shot 'Apocalypse Now' in Manila in the '70s, more than a thousand extras were employed. If we can make the Philippines the center of filmmaking in Asia again, that will be a big boost to local cinema."

Budget

The 3rd Cinemanila International Film Festival, to be held Dec. 7 to 16, is subsidized by the Makati government with a budget of P10 million.

Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay is optimistic that Cinemanila can also promote Makati as a center of arts and culture.

"More than being a financial and business district, we hope to make Makati a center of arts, culture and entertainment," Binay said.

"We are confident that with Cinemanila, the city government will rekindle a renaissance of quality Filipino films and create a wider appreciation for cinema and the arts in general.

"We are also confident that as a result of Makati's commitment to the arts, the Philippines will once again be acknowledged as a premier destination for the international arts and culture community," Binay added.

Aguiluz said that even the Ayalas of Makati, known to be patrons of the arts, are supporting the festival by allowing the free use of the Greenbelt and Glorietta cinemas, where the films will be screened.

Other films

The 3rd Cinemanila International Film Festival will feature 75 critically acclaimed films from Korea, Thailand, France, Belgium, Turkey, Mexico, Norway, Czech Republic, Germany, Japan, Israel, Iran, Netherlands, Canada, Singapore, USA, Malaysia, Hong Kong, New Zealand and Sri Lanka.

The other films will be shown at the Cultural Center of the Philippines and the University of the Philippines Film Center.

A regional film tour will also be conducted in Cebu, Davao and Iloilo.

President Macapagal-Arroyo is guest of honor when Cinemanila opens on Dec. 6 at Onstage in Greenbelt.

The opening ceremony will also be graced by Binay, Aquino, city officials of Makati, filmmakers, critics, directors, actors and film producers from different parts of the globe.

Three films will be screened during the gala night—South Korea's "Chunhyang" by Im Kwon-Taek, Belgium's "No Man's Land" by Danis Tanovic and France's "Under the Sand" by Francois Ozon.

Regular screening of the films will start Dec. 7.

Tickets throughout the nine-day festival will cost P75 each.

The Makati government has also waived taxes for Cinemanila films.

This year, Cinemanila will present lifetime achievement awards to Gloria Romero, Rosa Rosal and Eddie Garcia.

The festival is divided into several sections: World Cinema, Asian Cinema, Philippine Cinema and Young Cinema (Digital Program).

About 20 international guests are invited to the event. Seven world-renowned film personalities will comprise the festival jury.

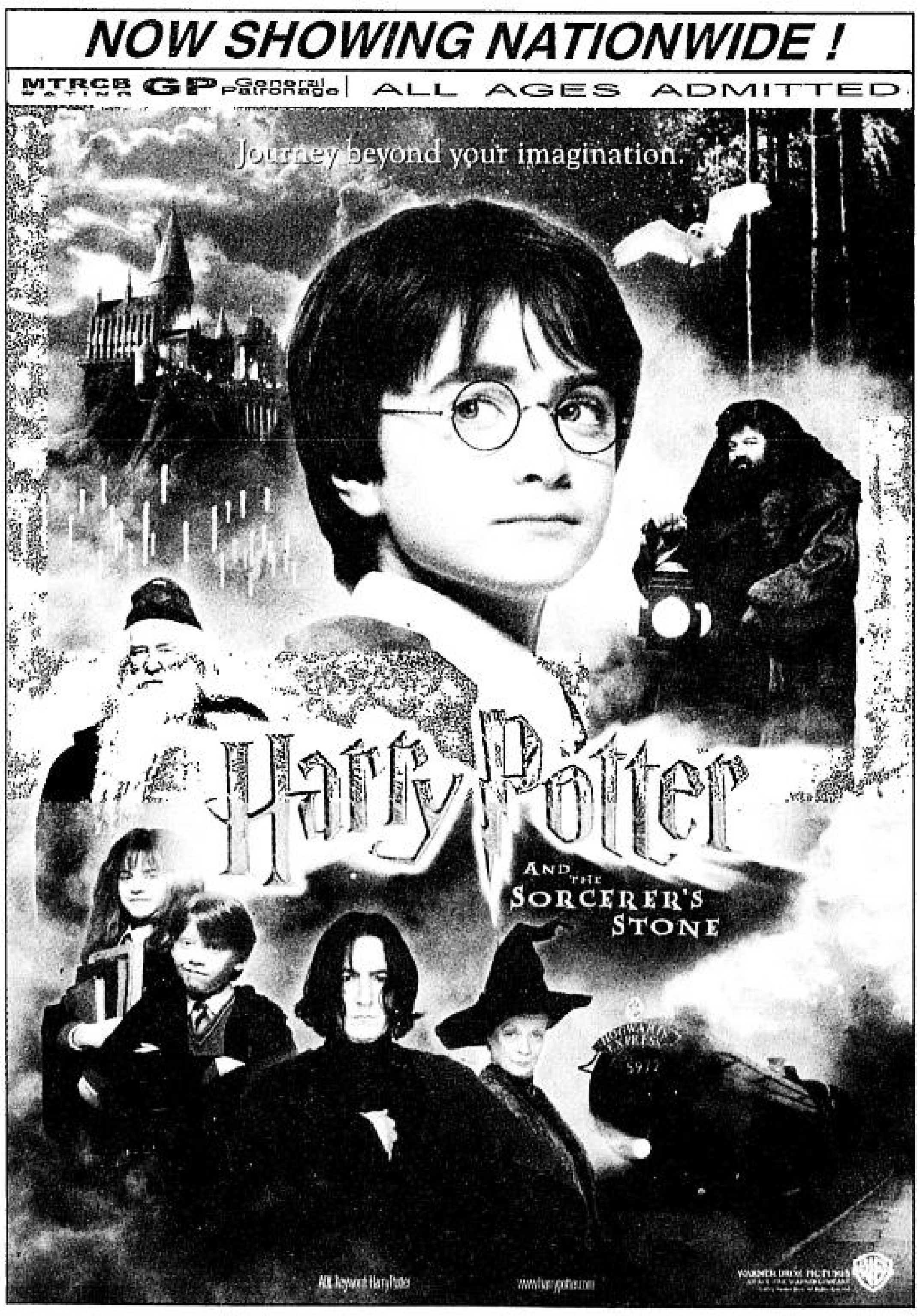
This year, Cinemanila will focus on Asian-American filmmakers. The works of young Filipino-American actors will be showcased during the festival.

Director Lav Diaz's five-hour film, "Batang Westside," starring Priscilla Almeda, will be screened.

POWER PLANT
CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41 DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

SERENDIPITY - P 13 11:30, 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30	HARRY POTTER - GP 11:50, 3:00, 6:10, 9:20	MONSTERS, INC. - GP 11:25, 1:30, 3:35, 5:40, 7:45, 9:50
MONSTERS, INC. - GP 12:30, 2:35, 4:40, 6:45, 8:50	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW - R 18 11:15, 1:20, 3:25, 5:30, 7:35, 9:40	HARRY POTTER - GP 12:50, 4:00, 7:10, 10:20

Matinee, P80, Mon.-Fri.,11:00 am to 4:45 pm Screenings, Free Seating.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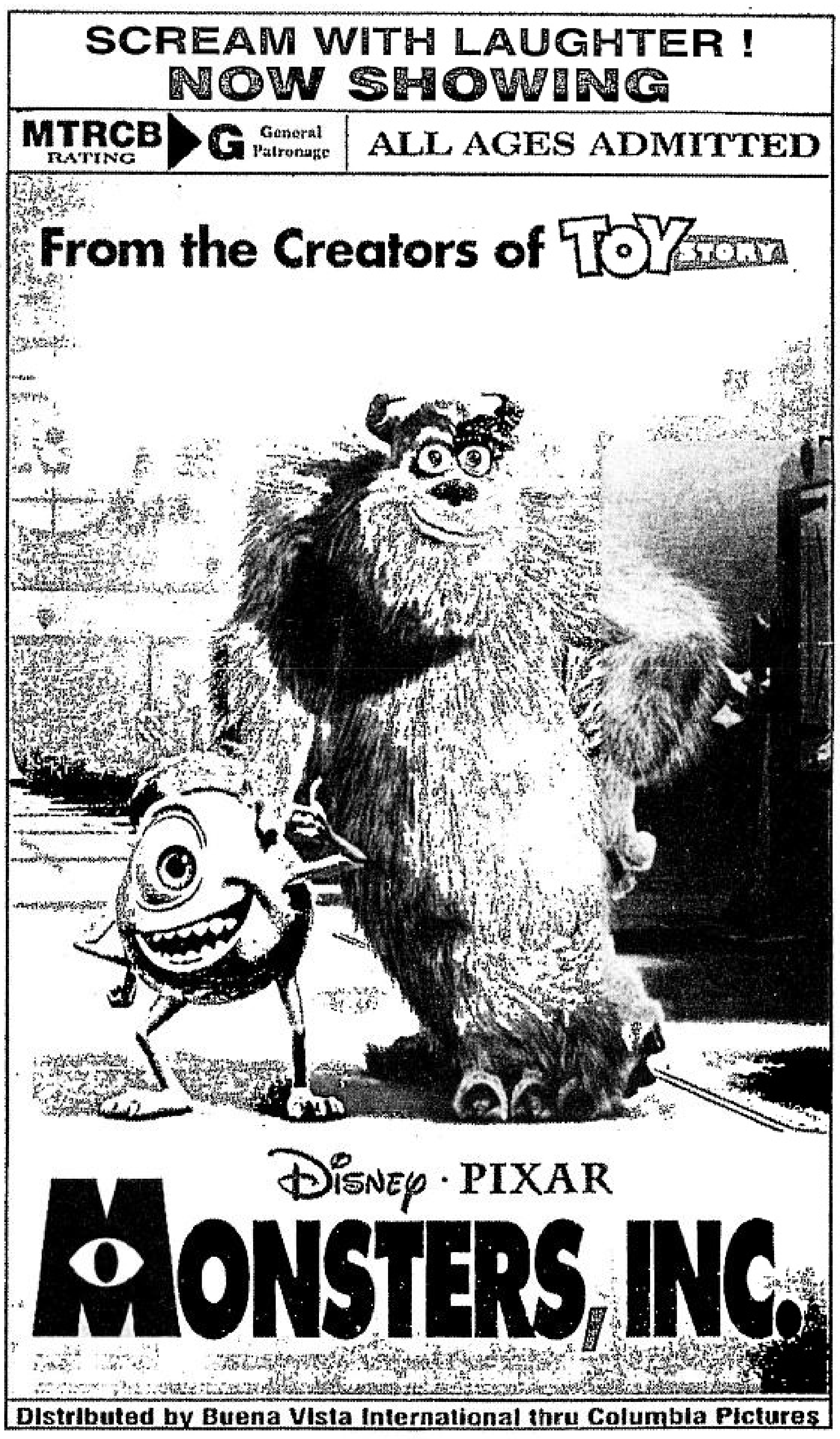
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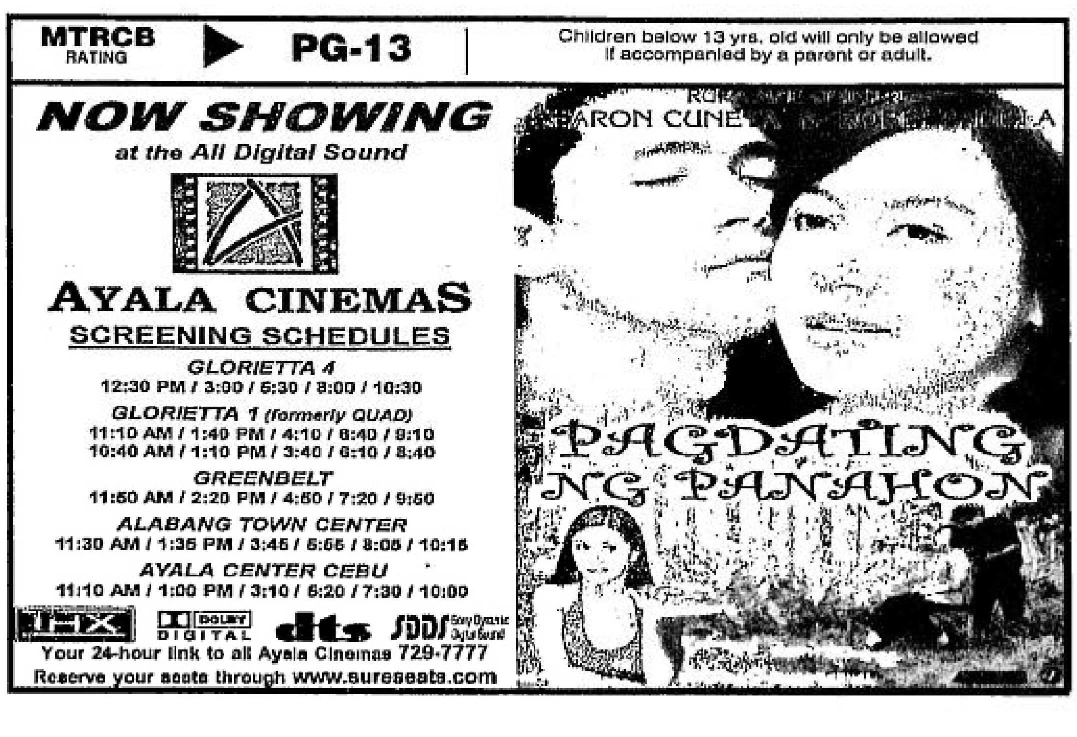
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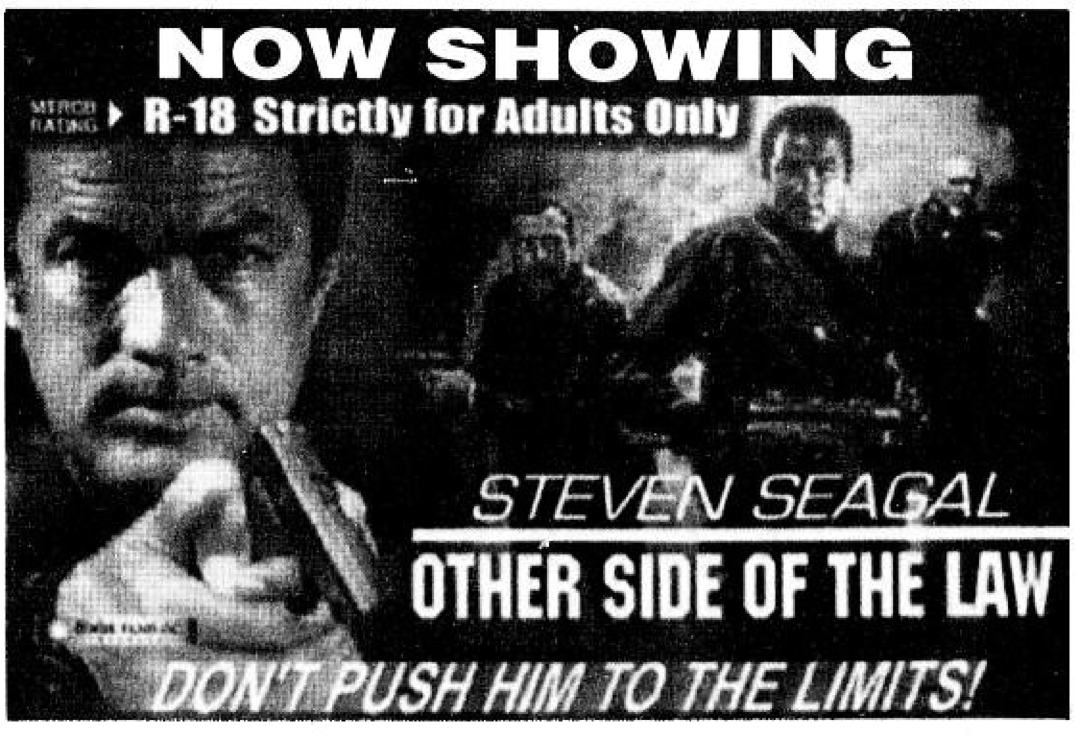
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Cojuangco eyes deal with foreign brewer

BY GIL C. CABACUNGAN JR.

BUSINESSMAN Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr. is reportedly brewing up a multibillion-dollar deal with a major foreign beer maker to buy out the Coconut Industry Investment Fund's strategic stake in the company.

This could be Cojuangco's final gambit in his decades long battle to take full control of the country's largest food and beverage concern considering his tenuous hold on San Miguel and increasing pressure from the government, specifically the Presidential Commission on Good Government and the Office of the Solicitor General, to declare the P50-billion coconut levy funds as public.

A company insider told the INQUIRER that the Cojuangco-led management team was drawing up a two-stage strategy aimed at neutralizing the government's holdings in San Miguel and finally remove the lingering question on the status of the CIIF.

A San Miguel spokesperson said that San Miguel was open to negotiations with any foreign investor for a stake in the company but that no deal with any group was definite yet.

Based on preliminary discussions with potential foreign investors, Cojuangco, under the first stage,,will offer to sell between 15 percent and 20 percent of San Miguel, by using either treasury shares or issuing new stocks, to a potential ally at $1.50 per share or roughly 50 percent premium over the prevailing price of its "B" shares.

San Miguel's treasury shares have already ballooned to roughly 10 percent following management's decision to buy back its shares in the depressed stock market since Cojuangco took over in mid-1998. Management had insisted that San Miguel shares were still the best bet they could make with its war chest but critics note that the buybacks were meant to prop up its share prices and avoid a potential embarrassment to Cojuangco.

The source said management could sell the treasury shares even without stockholder consent because the buyback approved was with an eye on re-selling them at a later date. Also, San Miguel still has an estimated 250 million in unissued shares from its P3-billion authorized capital stock which management could sell without going to stockholders. To avoid dilution, existing shareholders should buy additional shares at the same price of $1.50 per share.

The source said San Miguel has remained a potent target among the world's giant brewers because it is one of the few remaining giant breweries in the world which has a solid domestic base and an ideal gateway to the Chinese market.

But foreign investors have balked at acquiring any interest in San Miguel because of the legal dis-

COJUANGCO/ B4

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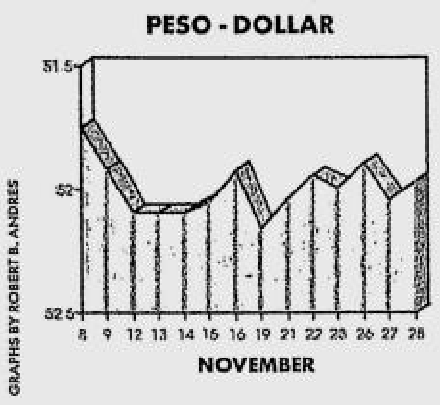

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As of 5 p.m.,
Nov. 28, 2001

¥ 123.58 = $1
As of 5 p.m.,
Nov. 28, 2001

GOLD:$275/275.50
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STOCK MARKET

Shares rise 0.8%

SHARE prices rose 0.8 percent yesterday on continued bargain hunting, with the market largely ignoring hostilities involving Muslim rebels in the south, brokers said.

"It usually takes time before a rally fizzles out," said Juanis Barredo at Citiseconline.com.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index added 9.05 points to 1,120.57.

Barredo said investors would likely shift to smaller stocks soon following the significant rise in most blue chips since last week.

Turnover was 1.16 billion shares worth P636.52 million from Tuesday's 1.16 billion shares worth P563.54 million.

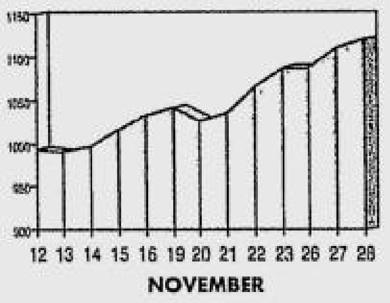
KGI Securities analyst Dara Calderon said the market's initial weakness may have been prompted by concern over the hostage crisis in the south.

"Some people were worried initially with the negative developments, which was probably why the market went down early," said Calderon. "But I think the basic mood in the market is still positive."

Calderon said expectation that the US economy will recover later next year following the Sept. 11 terror attacks has boosted investor confidence in global financial markets.

AFP, AP

PSE Composite Index



(See stock market report on Page B4)

Metro Pacific open to buyout by management

BY DORIS C. DUMLAO

FIRST Pacific Co. Ltd. of Hong Kong is open to a management buyout of Metro Pacific Corp. being structured by MPC president Ricardo Pascua, who has now gone on leave to disinterest himself from the ongoing bidding process for the company's stake in the Fort Bonifacio Global City.

But MPC's top officials said negotiations on the sale of MPC's controlling stake in Bonifacio Land Corp., developer of the 150-hectare Global City—were progressing. However, the property company aims to retire P3.5 billion of its debts by the second quarter of next year whether or not a deal is closed by that time.

In a press briefing yesterday, First Pacific executive chair and MPC chair Manuel Pangilinan said Pascua had already been "quarantined" from the bidding process for BLC due to his interest in a management buyout of MPC. However, he said no formal offer had been presented to First Pacific.

METRO/ B8

Gov't upbeat on $225-M bonds

BY CLARISSA S. BATINO

EVEN before its three underwriters and a syndicate of banks could sign the deal today, Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho yesterday said he was confident a $225-million euro bond issue would be oversubscribed.

"I am certain that we could raise 250 million euros, and there is a good chance the issue would be oversubscribed. The demand for the sovereign bond issue had been very good," the finance secretary told reporters.

The Philippine government would sign today the five-year euro bond deal with lead arrangers Deutsche Bank, Salomon Smith Barney and UBS Warburg.

JP Morgan Chase and Morgan Stanley Dean Witter were also appointed as co-managers for the transaction.

The signing will formalize the issuance of the bonds, the proceeds of which would be used by National Power Corp. to pay its maturing obligations this year, including part of P15 billion in advances from the national government.

Camacho said the final amount to be raised as well as the pricing of the euro bonds have yet to be determined by the government and the underwriters.

Government officials led by Camacho toured major European cities last week to sell the bonds while another team comprised of the underwriters concluded a roadshow in the Hong Kong and Singapore markets the other day.

"Napocor is also looking at its own borrowings. It does not need to raise $530 million anymore this year because some of its requirements could be deferred for next year," the finance secretary said.

The state-owned power firm needs about $1 billion in loans next year to pay its maturing obligations and finance its operating and capital expenses.

Camacho explained that the government had decided to borrow funds in behalf of Napocor because it would be cheaper by about three-quarters of a percentage point.

The other day, the finance chief also signed a P7-billion deal for 2- and 3-year, dollar-linked peso notes with lead arrangers Deutsche Bank AG, Multinational Investment Corp. and Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.

Seven banks—Metrobank, Equitable PCI Bank, Banco de Oro, Chinatrust Philippines, ING Bank, Union Bank of the Philippines, China Banking Corp. —bought the bonds from the lead underwriters.

The 2-year, dollar-linked notes offered a coupon rate of 8.5625 percent while the 3-year instrument provided a yield of 10.4375 percent at an exchange rate of P52.051 to a dollar.

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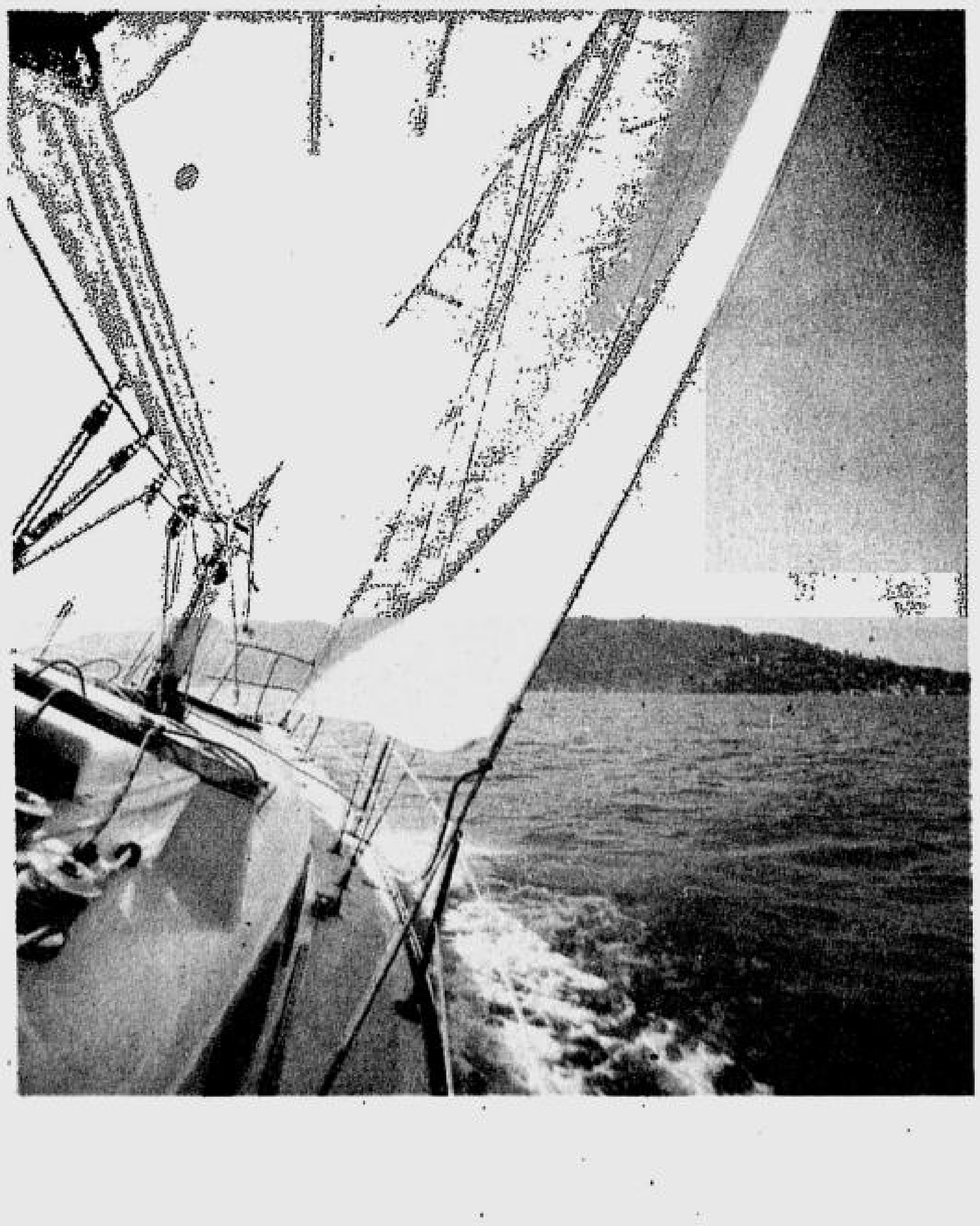

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BMW 325ia Exec	2,700,000	945,000	46,000
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Plan to tap import inspector dropped

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE GOVERNMENT, according to Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho, has junked an earlier plan to hire again a pre-shipment import inspector.

Camacho said in a Senate budget hearing yesterday that a committee formed to determine whether the services of a third-party pre-shipment import inspector were still needed had concluded that the Bureau of Customs could perform the task itself.

"We are no longer inclined to hire a pre-shipment import inspector because what we only need right now is an update of the valuation database of customs," Camacho said.

He said the government might have to tap the services of a pre-shipment inspector to update the database of the Bureau of Customs.

The finance chief earlier said the government had received at least four technical proposals to handle the pre-shipment import inspection requirements of the country. They include Switzerland-based Societe Generale de Surveillance, which served as the country's pre-shipment import inspector for 12 years, and Filipino firm Smith Bell & Co., a trading firm with businesses in insurance, financing, shipping, petroleum and petro-chemical.

The government had considered hiring a pre-shipment import inspector again upon the prodding of business groups led by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry. However, some sectors in the government wanted the private sector to shoulder the cost of the inspection in view of the poor state of the national coffers.

Reports indicated that the government owed SGS some P6.4 billion in accumulated fees. However, sources said the government and SGS have completed the

PLAN/ B8

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MEGAWORLD GLOBUS ASIA, INC., owner/developer of THE SALCEDO PARK CONDOMINIUM PROJECT, wishes to announce to all condominium unit owners/buyers and the public at large that the NOTICE OF CONTRACTOR'S LIEN which Atty. Wilfredo M. Garrido, Jr., counsel for DSM Construction & Development Corporation, caused to be published in the Philippine Daily Inquirer and other metropolitan dailies is without any force and effect in view of the existence of a restraining order issued by the Court of Appeals on November 20, 2001 in connection with CA-GR SP No. 67432 entitled MEGAWORLD GLOBUS ASIA, INC. vs. DSM CONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT CORP. ET AL.

MEGAWORLD GLOBUS ASIA, INC. assures its clients that it has the means and the capability to settle any legitimate and lawful obligation that it may have with any contractor or supplier. Be that is it may, it is committed to pursue its case against DSM CONSTRUCTION & DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION as it firmly believes in the fairness and integrity of the Philippine judicial system.

THE MANAGEMENT
Megaworld Globus Asia, Inc.

Fired chicken

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

MORE than 10 months into this cute administration, the Palace still struggles to get all its chicken (*manok, ba, manok!*) through the Commission on Appointments.

At least four Cabinet members are having a tough time. They are being fried in the powerful CA. All of them are in various stages of . . . well, non-confirmation.

Among them is Finance Secretary Jose Isisdro Camacho, who is guilty of having children who did not like Sen. Tessie Aquino-Oreta.

Camacho nevertheless is in good company. There's Justice Secretary Hernando Perez, who is not really the best friend of another opposition senator.

Natural Resources Secretary Heherson Alvarez, the last one to be appointed by the Palace, has natural enemies among the so-called civil society.

Finally, there's the favorite of Gloriaetta's *kabalen* from Clark, none other than Transportation and Communications Secretary Pantaleon Alvarez. Bebot, for short.

Gloriaetta even tries to do a little courting. Invited by the Palace to join her trip to the United States was Sen. Aquilino Pimentel. He thought the trip was a success.

Alright, Pimentel did not say it was a "smashing" success, which it was to every Cabinet member in the trip. Still, Pimentel never said a bad thing about the trip.

* * *

ANYWAY, talk is rife about a Cabinet revamp. In that US trip, I asked a confidante of Gloriaetta about it pointblank. He just stared at me, not saying a word. So there, it's your proof, they are really talking about a revamp.

If the revamp happens soon, as talks in Malacañang corridors say it will, the leading candidate of course is Alvarez of DOTC—not DENR. The complaints against him are documented. Those against the other three are mere hearsay.

My source says that Gloriaetta is even talking about just firing out Alvarez. He is not her "chicken," anyway, not one of her original group. Nobody knows whose *manok* he is, come to think of it, attorney.

Maybe Gloriaetta thinks that firing out Alvarez is some kind of euthanasia. Of the four troubled Cabinet members, Alvarez stands the best chance of getting clobbered in the CA. He is facing a plunder case.

* * *

IT involves his role in the multibillion-peso contract of the government with Piatco. This is the company building the Terminal 3 at the Naia.

By his own admission, Alvarez is a stockholder of Wintrack Builders, which, in turn, is a contractor of Piatco. The two companies cheated the government.

The CA itself got documents which showed Piatco had overbilled the project by at least P75 million. Guess what—Piatco subcontracted the work to Alvarez's Wintrack.

But where did the connection start between Alvarez and Piatco? Well, before he became a congressman, Alvarez was an assistant GM of the Naia.

As such, he was a member of the technical panel which evaluated the Piatco proposal to grab the terminal project from the local taipans.

Yes, it was the proposal which got an approval under Kuya Eddie, and it was the same one which underwent severe mangling under the man named Band . . . Wrist Band.

To think, Alvarez now insists it's his duty to implement the contract. Well and good. Let's just suffer it, with all its stupid provisions.

Even his former colleagues in Congress think that's a little bit too funny. Anyway, who pays for the contract? Not Alvarez. It's just all of us.

* * *

BY "us," I mean the consumers. And how come no consumer group is taking up the Piatco issue? Cement importers are lucky. They have two consumer groups.

Those are the Confederation of Homeowners' Associations for Reforms in Governance and Environment (Charge), and the Consumers Union of the Philippines (CUP). Both made serious noises lately about the cement importation issue.

Together with cement importers, CUP filed a case against Republic Act 8800 or the Safeguards Measure Act. They said it was unconstitutional.

The law empowered the DTI to protect local industries against unfair competition from abroad. You know—things like cement dumping.

So Judge Floro Alejo of the Valenzuela Regional Trial Court agreed with CUP. He issued an injunction order, stopping the DTI from doing its job. Nice!

* * *

AS for Charge, whose name reminds me of my credit card debts rather than the command to attack, it lobbies for cement importers out and out.

Sometime ago, its president, a certain Jesus Arranza, organized a press conference for TCC Cement Corp., which was only the country's biggest cement importer.

And just last Tuesday, Arranza was seen riding in a car with Napoleon Co of Cohaco Trading, the largest importer of Indonesian cement.

They attended the first public hearing of the Tariff Commission on the cement industry's application for a provisional 50-percent tariff on cement imports.

I heard of this guy Arranza. He used to fight smuggling and dumping of garments and textiles. So what brought about his change of heart?

Well, Cup and Charge claimed that cement imports gave consumers a choice. Imported cement, after all, is cheap. Hmm. Is that so?

Importers pay P56 per bag for Indonesian cement. They sell it to consumers at only around P137 per bag. And they call that a choice?

* * *

MOREOVER, their friends among cement importers are not exactly model corporate citizens. Just recently, the Bureau of Customs fined TCC.

It seems the company cheated on how much cement it was bringing into the country. Customs found out about it and slapped a P2-million fine on TCC.

Also, Customs is investigating the Cebu-based Stanphil Industries for alleged tampered invoices. There are three other importers in the Customs watchlist.

Now, by joining the cheating cement importers, those two consumer groups are only helping them kill the locals.

Some of these importers are the very same guys who killed the local steel industry. They imported cheap steel billets from Russia.

In the beginning, sure, the steel billets were cheap. But even while the local firms were dying, steel prices already started to go up. Consumer choice, my foot!

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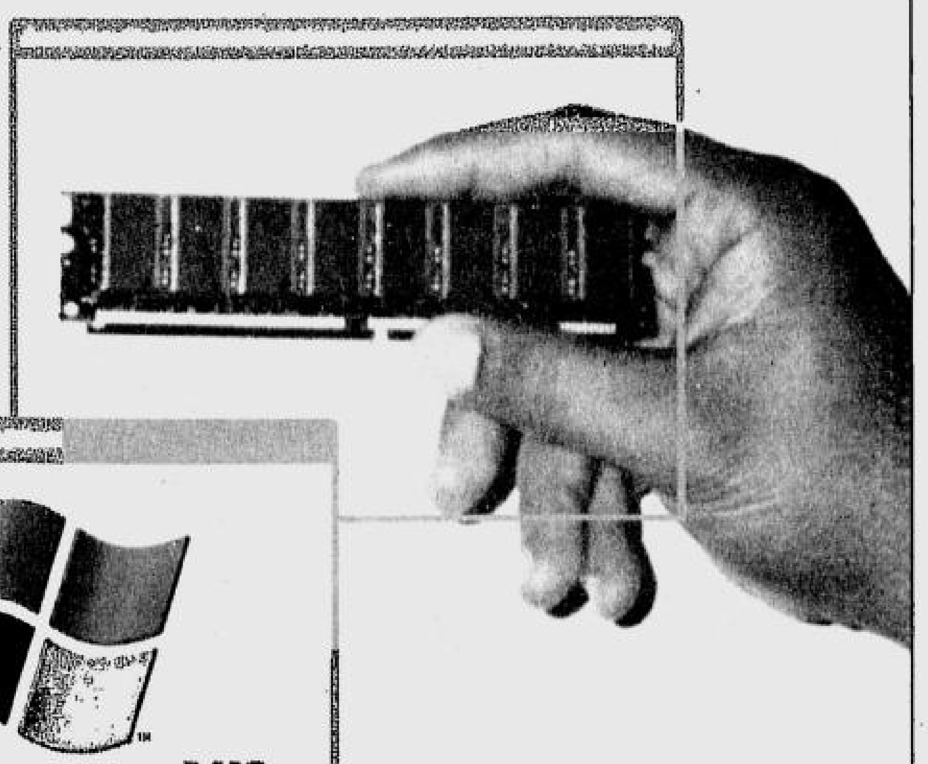

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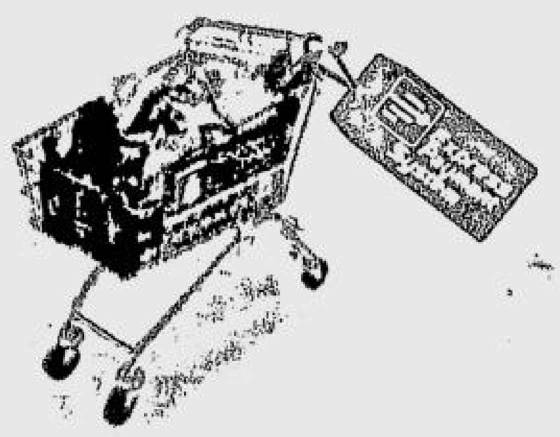

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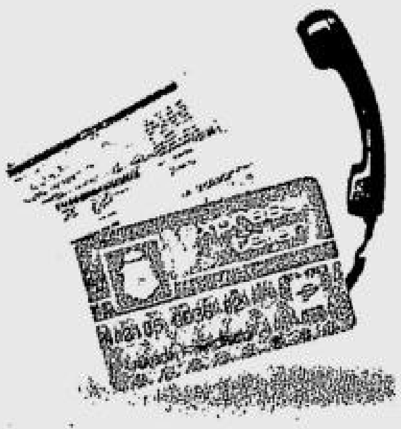

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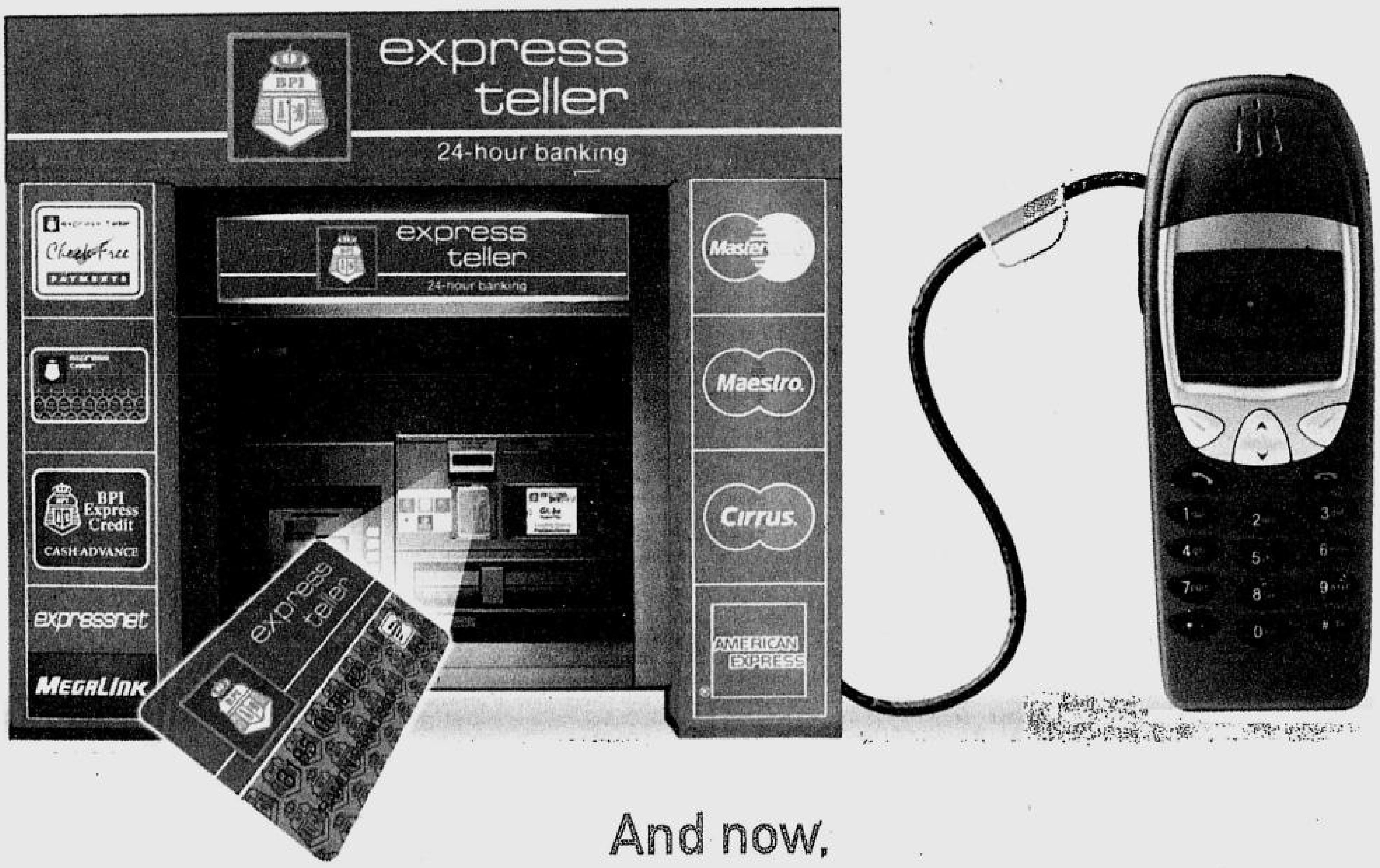
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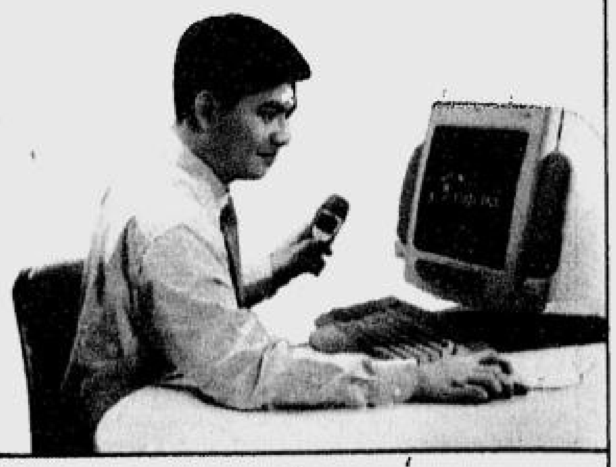

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A tradition of leadership

PSE given until Tuesday to elect new president

By Doris C. Dumlao
and Elena R. Torrijos

THE PHILIPPINE Stock Exchange board yesterday deferred to Tuesday next week the election of a new president, citing the need to further evaluate the two candidates—former finance ministers Jesus Estanislao and Ernest Leung.

In a press briefing after the board meeting, PSE corporate secretary Edgardo Guevarra said the Securities and Exchange Commission had agreed to give the exchange more time to pick a new president.

But if the PSE still failed to choose a president by that day, the SEC would appoint an acting president for the exchange who would assume the post the following day, SEC chair Lilia Bautista told reporters yesterday afternoon.

The SEC would choose only between Leung and Estanislao. The PSE had shortlisted and cleared the two names with the SEC earlier.

As reported by the INQUIRER on Monday, the race for the PSE presidency was now down to Estanislao and Leung as other candidates have declined the offer. Guevarra confirmed that the two candidates have agreed to run for the post.

He said Estanislao was suggested by veteran broker and board member Robert Coyiuto Jr. while Leung was recommended by PSE chair Felipe Yap. He also noted that another board member, Harry Liu, had floated a new name: former Allied Bank president Peter Favila.

"But I think it will boil down to the two (Estanislao and Leung)," he said.

Bautista also indicated that no new names would be considered by the SEC. She said the SEC believed either Estanislao or Leung would be good for the PSE.

Estanislao, currently CEO of the Institute for Corporate Directors, is an economist and an advocate of good corporate governance. He was economic planning and finance minister during the Aquino administration.

Leung, on the other hand, served briefly as finance secretary during the Ramos administration and later was named president of Philippine Deposit Insurance Co. The most recent post he held was as chair of Development Bank of the Philippines.

Guevarra said that should the PSE fail to elect a new president by Tuesday, the SEC could appoint an officer-in-charge, possibly one of the incumbent associate commissioners.

"We were unable to agree on anything so we postponed the election to next week so that the board will have time to meet with the candidates. It is only fair to know them first before voting for them," Guevarra said.

He said a PSE president receives P6 million to P7 million in annual compensation.

Other sources said the reason why the board was not able to elect a new president, aside from those who wanted more time to scrutinize the candidates and to float more names, was that a group had proposed to simply reinstate president-on-leave Ramon T. Garcia on active duty.

One obstacle is that a new appointee would serve only the unexpired term of Garcia until March next year and would have no assurance of getting a full two-year term because the mandate of the incumbent board also expires in March.

Guevarra said 11 of the 15 board members attended yesterday's meeting. Those who were unable to attend were: member-broker Vivian Yuchengco and non-broker board members Metro Pacific chair Manuel Pangilinan, accounting guru Washington Sycip and ABS-CBN chair Eugenio Lopez III.

Among other prominent businessmen earlier considered by the PSE but who had declined the offer were banker Octavio Espiritu, former Social Security System administrator Renato Valencia and former Finance Minister Vicente Jayme.

The president-on-leave, Garcia, was eased out by the PSE board due to his strong stance on the Fort Bonifacio relocation issue. But sources said Garcia was still keen on running as a non-broker board member and possibly getting another crack at the presidency next March.

Cojuangco eyes deal with foreign brewer

(From page B1)

pute on the status of the CIIF shares and question on Cojuangco's ownership in the company. Cojuangco's final gambit appears to solve all of the foreign investor's concerns.

While both Anheuser-Busch and Heineken have made preliminary discussions with San Miguel for a possible buy-in in the past, the source said Cojuangco has had serious discussions with three groups in the last 12 months—Belgium's Interbrew; a major Thai brewer; and Japan's Kirin beer—and management was moving closer to pulling the trigger with one of these investors. Another source said Kirin has emerged as the likely ally of Cojuangco in San Miguel.

Following the entry of the foreign investor, management, in the second stage, would then use the estimated P30-billion proceeds of the sale to a foreign investor to buy the CIIF's disputed stake in San Miguel at the same price of $1.50 per share made by the foreign investor. Management would then convert the shares into treasury shares.

On the surface, the buy-in appears to be a good deal for the company and its shareholders because it would finally resolve the long-running legal battle between Cojuangco and the government for control of San Miguel since 1986. The skirmish between the lawyers of the government and Cojuangco has been blamed for San Miguel's inability to achieve its full potential in the past two decades because it has limited it financing options to expand its operations.

The deal is likely to be drummed up by the Cojuangco camp as a big shot in the arm to the Philippines' sagging image abroad. Imagine, a major foreign brewer pumping in cold cash into the country, and paying a premium at that, despite the gloomy global economic outlook.

Trojan Horse

But sources familiar with the deal likened it to the Trojan Horse—appealing on the outside but deadly inside. In gaming parlance, Cojuangco is *llamadong-llamado* while the government and the farmers are *dehado*.

The source said Cojuangco has the most to benefit from the deal—it would allow him to firm up his grip and perpetuate his control of San Miguel without spending any of his own money and without waiting for a ruling from the Supreme Court on whether the coco levy (which was the source of the CIIF) was a public or private fund.

COJUANGCO

The deal is grossly disadvantageous to the government and the coconut farmers because it would unduly dilute their shareholdings. The CIIF, the Government Service Insurance System, the Social Security System, and the PCGG have a combined 44 percent in San Miguel, representing the biggest group of investors in the company.

In the first stage, with the sale of a 20-percent stake in San Miguel to a foreign investor, the government block's holdings would fall from 44 percent to 36.6 percent, which would put them on the same equity level as the combined shares of Cojuangco and his foreign firm.

Even in the first stage, Cojuangco will already firm up his control of San Miguel with the SMC Retirement Fund, which owns 5.4 percent of the company. Management controls the voting rights of the retirement fund, which could prove to be the swing vote on crucial issues. The second stage, the buyout of the CIIF funds, would merely formalize and make permanent Cojuangco's reign in San Miguel.

Critics of the deal snuff at the premium to be paid by the potential investor and the P30 billion obtained by the farmers with the sale of CIIF shares because the government and the farmers would get a better deal selling their shares at the same time. The INQUIRER source said the government block's 44 percent would definitely command a bigger premium from foreign investors than the 20 percent being dangled by Cojuangco.

The INQUIRER source said the scheme was apparently a last-ditch attempt by Cojuangco to get his hands on the coco levy funds following years of futile attempts to privatize the fund. Cojuangco believes that 2004 is too long a wait for a friendly administration to come in.

Aborted attempts

The source said Cojuangco has had two aborted tries to unload his 20-percent stake in San Miguel—first, to the First Pacific group, and second, to business rival Lucio Tan. Cojuangco was supposed to legitimize his claim on San Miguel last year with the controversial executive order but former President Estrada did not implement the order as his term was cut short by an uprising in January this year.

Cojuangco is unlikely to sustain his delaying tactics which his legal team successfully employed in blocking the courts from ruling on the status of the coco levy.

Cojuangco apparently felt that he has to take drastic steps within the next 12 months because of the massive change in the composition of the Supreme Court (a new justice was named this year and five are set to retire next year).

Cojuangco managed to retain control of the San Miguel board this year on a mere technicality as the PCGG was barred from replacing the Estrada nominees on the board of directors. Next year is likely to be a different story with the PCGG expected to vote its shares in the annual stockholders' meeting.

The INQUIRER source said the noose was tightening on Cojuangco's neck under this regime with the Macapagal administration's vow not to enter into any compromise in the coco levy case while the Ombudsman has revived the graft cases against Cojuangco.

The PCGG and the OSG have recently appealed to the Senate to pass a law that would finally confirm the P50-billion coco levy money as public fund to bolster the government's case against Cojuangco and his associates.

S&P lowers PLDT credit rating

STANDARD and Poor's yesterday lowered its long-term foreign currency corporate credit and senior unsecured debt ratings on Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) by two notches, to BB- from BB+.

At the same time, the rating on PLDT's existing series III preferred stock was also lowered to B- from B+ and said the outlook was developing.

S&P said the downgrade reflected the company's difficulties in refinancing its debt, against the background of a relatively short debt maturity structure and a highly leveraged balance sheet. This position comes despite an improvement in the company's underlying business position, it added.

The postponement of its $250-million debt issuance in September demonstrated the formidable challenge of refinancing in the international credit markets, S&P said.

The company is facing about P83 billion ($1.6 billion) in debt maturing between 2002-2004, including $417 million in debt in 2002. Taking into account the company's expected internal cash flow, PLDT will need about $650 million in external funding to refinance its existing debt. PLDT's objective is to resolve its refinancing problem and to reduce the company's overall indebtedness in the medium term.

As of Sept. 30, PLDT's total debt was P171 billion, of which about 98 percent was in US dollars.

S&P said PLDT's leverage indicators remained high, with a debt-to-capital ratio of 65 percent. "Although hard currency-linked revenues made up about 70 percent of PLDT's net revenues, the company remains susceptible to the volatility of the Philippine pesos," it said.

In addition to its foreign currency denominated debt, about 30 percent of its total operating and interest charges are US dollar-denominated.

As of Sept. 30, S&P said the company had capitalized accumulated foreign exchange differentials amounting to P77 billion, but only P12 billion has been recognized in its profit and loss statement. The outstanding P65 billion in losses accounted for 73 percent of PLDT's equity as of third quarter 2001.

The rating firm also noted that the domestic cellular market has become a duopoly in the past year, between PLDT and Globe Telecom Inc. The advent of another player, Digital Telecommunications Philippines Inc., is expected in 2002, and this will increase the industry's competitive environment in the medium term.

PLDT remains the leading telecom operator in the Philippines, with about 67 percent of the fixed-line market and 58 percent of the cellular market. The company recorded strong operating performance in the third quarter of 2001. Consolidated operating revenues and net income rose year-on-year by 22 percent and 42 percent, respectively, supported by a turnaround in profits at subsidiary Smart Communications Inc.

S&P said PLDT is attempting to address its near-to-medium term liquidity problem by lowering its capital expenditures, improving cost efficiency, and announcing its intention to sell a 15-percent to 20-percent interest in its subsidiary, Smart Communications Inc.

A key concern, according to S&P, was that PLDT remained highly dependent on external market conditions to refinance its debt. Finalizing the Smart sale and refinancing part of its maturing debt in 2003 and 2004 would improve its liquidity and lead to more manageable debt levels.

S&P said the underlying business profile, which is adequate and improving, could support an upgrade if the company successfully addresses its debt maturity profile.

DISCLOSURES

WILLIAM, Gothong & Aboitiz Inc. received from **Aboitiz & Co.** P20 million for the issuance of 40 million shares from the company's unissued but authorized capital stock.

* * *

EQUITABLE PCI Bank Inc. announced the resignation of Edgar Solilapsi and Horacio Templo as directors of the bank. Nominated to replace them were Teresita Alegre and Ma. Luz Generoso. Vivian Lee-Tiu also resigned as senior vice president.

* * *

PHILIPPINE Long Distance Telephone Co. declared cash dividends of P0.50 per share on its series H, L, M and Y 10-percent convertible preferred stock in favor of stockholders as of Dec. 27 and shall be payable on Jan. 31, 2002.

* * *

ELECTED directors of **AJO.Net Holdings Inc.** were Simplicio Roxas, Anselmo Trinidad Jr., Rey Albert Buson, Alfredo Ramos, Ronaldo Salonga, Miguel Varela and Antonio Ramon Lopez.

* * *

SOUTHEAST Asia Cement Holdings Inc. denied having any information that could explain the 39.31-percent drop in its share price last Nov. 22 and the subsequent 50-percent rise in its trading price last Nov. 26. ***Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research***

Philippine Stock Exchange

(As of Wednesday, November 28, 2001)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	1,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	53	53	52	52.5	282,400
China Banking Corp.	510	510	510	510	37,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	20	23	20	22.75	1,559,900
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	178	178	175	177	31,320
Philippine National Bank	48	48.5	48	48.5	50,000
Phil. Savings Bank	28	29	28	29	10,000
Security Bank Corp.	17.5	18	17.5	17.75	12,300
Union Bank of the Phil.	14.5	15.5	14.5	15	590,000
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Bankard Inc.	1	1	1	1	20,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	220	220	220	220	100
Manulife Financial Corp.	1370	1400	1370	1400	6,610
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	20,000
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1150	1160	1150	1160	15,880
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	25.5	26.5	25.5	26.5	20,700
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.42	0.42	0.38	0.41	2,080,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	580	580	570	580	13,050
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.027	0.027	0.027	0.027	200,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.49	10,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	3.1	3.1	3	3	6,016,000
Piltel	0.35	0.36	0.35	0.36	2,120,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	412.5	422.5	405	420	101,880
Ivantage Corp.	0.48	0.56	0.48	0.56	11,230,000
Philweb.Com Inc.	0.021	0.022	0.02	0.022	148,700,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	24.25	24.5	23.75	24.5	65,000
Manila Electric Co. B	31.5	31.5	30	31	1,145,600
Petron Corp.	1.44	1.52	1.42	1.52	14,745,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.82	0.84	0.82	0.84	860,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	1.76	1.8	1.68	1.72	11,959,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.27	0.34	0.27	0.3	440,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	20,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.29	0.3	0.29	0.29	520,000
Republic Cement Corp.	0.86	0.86	0.86	0.86	50,000
Union Cement Corp.	1	1	0.96	0.96	1,000,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	5.8	5.9	5.8	5.8	305,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	12.25	12.25	12	12	239,100
La Tondena Distillers Inc.	24.25	25	24.25	25	31,300
RFM Corp.	2.04	2.06	2	2	3,179,000
San Miguel Corp. A	41	41.5	41	41.5	90,700
San Miguel Corp. B	51.5	52	51	51	307,600
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.59	0.62	0.59	0.6	110,000
Ayala Corp.	4.95	4.95	4.8	4.85	11,182,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	1.48	1.54	1.46	1.54	408,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.69	0.77	0.69	0.77	2,070,000
A. Soriano Corp.	0.49	0.55	0.49	0.55	28,560,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.006	0.0065	0.006	0.0065	49,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.8	2	1.8	2	75,000
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	200,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.78	0.81	0.73	0.79	34,980,000
A Brown Company Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	10,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.15	0.18	0.15	0.18	350,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.0675	0.0675	0.06	0.06	6,200,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.185	0.205	0.18	0.2	17,410,000
Ebecom Holdings Inc.	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	1,800,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.032	0.032	0.032	0.032	100,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	26.5	26.5	26	26	508,800
Global Equities Inc.	0.11	0.12	0.11	0.12	1,140,000
Guoco Holdings (Phils.)	0.14	0.15	0.135	0.145	10,350,000
House of Investments Inc.	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42	10,000
Ionics Inc.	6.5	6.8	6.5	6.8	277,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.56	1.58	1.54	1.58	177,000
Macroasia Corp.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	120,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.017	0.017	0.017	0.017	200,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.69	0.69	0.65	0.67	780,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.34	0.34	0.32	0.34	6,330,000
Music Corp.	0.4	0.46	0.38	0.46	30,510,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.38	0.41	0.35	0.39	19,270,000
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	3.8	4	3.8	4	70,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.12	0.13	0.12	0.13	1,950,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	50,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.28	0.3	0.28	0.29	3,710,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Central Azucar Don Pedro	0.8	0.82	0.8	0.81	590,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	11	11	11	11	3,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.36	0.39	0.36	0.39	210,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	760,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.43	0.43	0.43	0.43	10,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	200,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	25.5	26	25.5	26	3,640,400
Equitable PCI Bank-War	1.4	1.8	1.4	1.8	100,000
Omico Corp. Warrant	0.0012	0.0012	0.0012	0.0012	175,000,000
Philweb.Com Inc. -Warrants	0.0065	0.0065	0.006	0.0065	316,000,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	4.85	4.95	4.85	4.95	9,374,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.21	0.215	1,890,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.36	0.36	0.34	0.35	7,010,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.235	0.245	8,350,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.74	1.76	1.68	1.72	12,503,000
Phil Realty And Holdings	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.085	200,000
SM Development Corp.	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	60,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.4	6.4	6.2	6.2	2,096,000
Urbancorp Realty Dev. Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	50,000
MINING					
Itogon-Suyoc Mines A	0.024	0.026	0.023	0.025	70,700,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.16	0.16	0.15	0.16	300,000
Omico Corp.	0.0032	0.0034	0.0032	0.0034	33,000,000
Polar Mines & Dev't Corp.	0.018	0.019	0.018	0.019	15,800,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	160,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.016	0.018	0.016	0.018	18,900,000
Interport Res.	0.003	0.0034	0.003	0.0034	2,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.2	0.2	0.19	0.19	50,000
Pacifica	0.015	0.017	0.015	0.017	43,000,000
South China Resources Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	230,000

	SHARES	VALUE (P)
Banks & Fin Svc	2,636,510	112,717,365.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	929,870,130	434,530,790.00
PRO	41,533,000	85,738,410.00
Mining	119,960,000	2,225,700.00
OIL	64,180,000	1,093,600.00
GRAND TOTALS :	1,158,179,640	636,305,865.00

AVERAGES

Banks & Fin Svc	446.09	UP 5.96
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,558.79	UP 12.74
PRO	500.00	DOWN 0.72
Mining	994.49	UP 11.04
OIL	1.39	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	708.06	UP 7.07
Composite	1,120.57	UP 9.05

NO. OF ADVANCES: 57; NO. OF DECLINES: 23; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 20;
NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 100; NO. OF TRADES: 4,844

CURRENCIES

Nov. 28, 2001

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.131606	1.000000	51.9950
Japan	Yen	0.009135	0.008073	0.4198
United Kingdom	Pound	1.602127	1.415800	73.6145
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.145098	0.128223	6.6670
Switzerland	Franc	0.683378	0.603901	31.3998
Canada	Dollar	0.710183	0.627589	32.6315
Singapore	Dollar	0.617352	0.545554	28.3661
Australia	Dollar	0.590609	0.521921	27.1373
Bahrain	Dinar	3.001766	2.652661	137.9251
Kuwait	Dinar	N/A	N/A	N/A
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.301770	0.266674	13.8657
Brunei	Dollar	0.615673	0.544070	28.2889
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000109	0.000096	0.0050
Thailand	Baht	0.025707	0.022717	1.1812
UAE	Dirham	0.308171	0.272331	14.1599
Korea	Won	0.000902	0.000797	0.0414
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.883700	45.9480
Germany	Mark	0.511292	0.451829	23.4928
France	Franc	0.152450	0.134719	7.0047
Netherlands	Guilder	0.453781	0.401006	20.8503
Austria	Schilling	0.072673	0.064221	3.3392
Belgium	Franc	0.024789	0.021906	1.1390
Italy	Lire	0.000516	0.000456	0.0237
Finland	Markka	0.168188	0.148628	7.7279
Portugal	Escudo	0.004988	0.004408	0.2292
Spain	Peseta	0.006010	0.005311	0.2761
Luxemburg	Franc	0.024789	0.021906	1.1390
Ireland	Punt	1.269739	1.122068	58.3419

MOTORING

CESAR D. MANGAWANG, Editor

Of car crashes and crumple zones

BY CHARLES E. BUBAN

NEWS of vehicle accidents always gets our attention, especially if celebrities or huge fatalities were involved. The untimely demise of personalities like actor James Dean and England's Princess Diana sometimes leads us to wonder what vehicle they were in and when the accident happened. Does this mean they rode in a not-so-safe vehicle? Is there really a safe car?

A safe vehicle is one that provides outstanding protection from injury in a vehicle crash for all occupants. Cars being built today include safety measures proven to save lives, including improved crumple zones, three-point seatbelts, improved front airbags and side airbags.

Laws of physics would tell us that when a vehicle strikes an immobile object it immediately starts to decelerate or slow down. The rigid structure of the vehicle will immediately absorb the impact crumpling the areas affected by the collision. Sometimes people wonder why crashed vehicles nowadays do not look so majestic compared to older vehicles that also figured in a similar accident. The answer lies with what auto manufacturers call crumple zones.

With crumple zones in vehicles, passengers nowadays are much safer. Crumple zones, which are usually the hood part and the rear compartment area of a vehicle, absorb the force of a crash and provide some cushioning to the main body of the vehicle where passengers are located. Just like a spring, the crumple zone will reduce the suddenness of the change in velocity for both vehicle and the passengers, making it safer than any other vehicle built decades ago.

So while vehicles involved in accidents today might end up looking worse, passengers today stand a much greater chance of walking away from a crash.

Auto safety experts maintain that two key factors determine crash compatibility, especially between vehicles of dissimilar size. First and foremost, the main structures of the two colliding vehicles must align and meet squarely, which means that the frame members of both vehicles must be about the same height above the road. This not only reduces the possibility of one vehicle overriding the other catastrophically, but also helps the protective crumple zones in both vehicles serve their purpose in absorbing crash energy.

Secondly, the crumple zone of a larger vehicle should be somewhat "softer" than a small car, since a larger vehicle can safely absorb more crash energy and thus help protect the occupants of both vehicles.

Safety cage

According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety of the United States, vehicle size can also mean a lot in protecting the passenger in both single (when the vehicle hits a stationary structure like a parked truck or post) and two-vehicle collisions because larger vehicles usually have longer crumple zones that help prevent damage to the area where passengers are located or the safety cage.

Vehicle weight, on the other hand, protects you principally in two-vehicle crashes, says the IIHS. In a head-on crash, for example, the heavier vehicle drives the lighter one backward. This decreases forces inside the heavy vehicle and increases forces in the lighter one. So while all heavy vehicles, even poorly designed ones, offer this advantage in two-vehicle collisions, they may not offer good protection in crashes where the vehicle slams on a pillar or wall.

Crash test

On the crash-testing facilities where engineers and technical experts use car makes we buy in the market, they experimented on the different types of crashes that these vehicles may encounter: front-end, rear-end and side, plus incidents where cars and trucks roll over.

They noted that passengers, who had been moving at the same speed as their vehicle, would slow down very quickly and that sudden deceleration is what is most likely to cause serious injuries or fatalities in a vehicle crash.

Most of their tests involved a 30-mph (48.2-kph) crash, which according to them, is the speed involved in 40 percent of cases reported in the United States. They've found that in each car crash there are actually three collisions involved: auto collision, human collision, and the human body's collision.

DON'T LET THIS HAPPEN TO YOU!
DRIVE CAREFULLY!

ROADSIDE monuments like this one only serve as a grim reminder for passing motorists that there is no such thing as "safe" vehicle if you drive recklessly and disregard safety precautions.

A vehicle running at about 30 mph and crashing to an immobile object, say a tree, will sustain crumpling of about two feet. That will be enough to stop the car safely but not the passengers inside. At the moment of impact, passengers in the car are still traveling at the vehicle's original speed. When the car comes to a complete stop, the passengers continue to be hurled forward until they come in contact with some part of the automobile like the steering wheel, the dashboard, the front window or back of the front seat.

Human collision in this crash can also cause serious injuries to other humans when they collide with each other. Rear-seat passengers often hit people in the front seat of a vehicle as they fly forward with incredible force. Thirty mph may not be that fast but according to crash test experts, a crash at this speed could make a 15-pound child generate an impact force greater than 300 lbs.—a force more than enough to crush anyone.

Even if our body comes to a complete stop after the crash, our internal organs are still moving. A sudden stop will make our internal organs slam into other organs like our bones. This "internal collision" of human organs is what often causes serious injury or death.

Imagine what happens when someone's head collides with the windshield of a car. After the person stops moving, the brain will still move and hit the inside wall of the skull. This results to injuries ranging from mild concussion to permanent brain damage, particularly if the brain slams hard and develops swelling and hemorrhage.

Preventing serious injuries

Wearing of safety belt has been proven to work in the crash test labs and outside on the road. In the United States alone, some 62,000 lives have been saved over the past decade and over a million injuries prevented by seatbelts.

Time and again, we are always

OF CAR/p.B7

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*Subject to Bank Approval thru Chinabank, Metrobank, BPI Family Bank **Limited Units Available.

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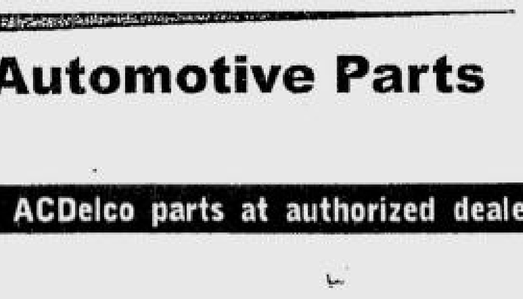

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FORD E-150 CHATEAU

Cruise controlled people mover

BY RAYMOND B. TRIBDINO
AND TESSA R. SALAZAR

SERIOUS people hauling prowess matched to tire shearing might. That is Ford's E-150 Chateau. Massive, colossal, huge, extensive, titanic, enormous, vast, expansive amply describe its 747-like proportions. While vigorous, rugged, strapping, robust, stump-pulling are synonyms best used to illustrate the power of its Tritron V8 engine.

Aimed at well-heeled "on-the-go" families, the E-150 offers enough seating capacity to comfortably haul teenagers to their rave parties, daughters and their friends to sleepovers and brothers and teammates to the BMX track, bikes and all.

This is America's favorite full-size van, having sold over 6 million units in the 21 years it has been available. Tessa and I used it to do exactly what it is supposed to do—haul people (and occasionally, cargo). This is what we found out.

It's a wide, wide world

Raymond: Before we start on the E-150, I'd like to clarify a few things about the Subaru Forester article last week. The comment came from advertising executive Bobby Arnneta. He said the Forester available here does not come with a 2.5-liter engine. Yes, it doesn't. Foresters distributed locally have a 2.0-liter powerplant, which can unleash about 125 or so horses. The vehicle I was referring to (and test-drove) did have a 2.5-liter engine, 165 horsepower and a sunroof. That version is not available through GM dealers yet.

Tessa: Even without the larger engine, the Forester did perform well.

Raymond: Now that's settled, let's go on to the task at hand.

Tessa: And what a huge task, too.

Raymond: It's about as wide as a small truck, as long as my room, about as tall as a container van and as thirsty as a marathoner after a 42-K run.

Tessa: Let's see, our fuel economy figures read 3.2 kilometers per liter city driving/traffic conditions and 4.9 kilometers per liter highway driving. That's not at all far from the Ford's official fuel mileage figures.

Raymond: We would have saved up more gas coupons if I didn't have a lead foot.

Tessa: This gargantuan van generates 215 horsepower and 398 Nm of torque through a 4-speed automatic transmission. Isn't that sufficient reason for the higher-than-usual gas bills?

Raymond: No contest there. But an L-300, or a Starex, or even those smoke-belching Kia Bestas smuggled, I mean, imported from Korea, can transport the same number of people at a lower cost per kilometer.

FORD E-150 chateau

Tessa: But without style.

One size fits all

Raymond: Space is what people look for when it comes to full-size vans, not *yabang*. Not even styling. Well, if you can have space and style, then you've got a seller.

Tessa: So what do you say about a mammoth van with the concept "one size fits all"—in this case a 10-passenger American-size loading capacity? Does it really click with the typical Filipino mentality that the more the merrier? They say you can't have it all. And with this, don't expect to have an easy time parking, especially during Christmas shopping when everybody seems to flock to the malls.

Danny E. (*engineer, formerly with a Japanese car company, wants to own an E-150*): The E-150 is the perfect vehicle for me. With three teenagers, two grade schoolers and a toddler, we need all the space we can get when traveling.

Samuel G. (*computer trader, plans to buy an E-150 next month*): I am upgrading to something with more style. I've decided to sell my three other vehicles in favor of the Chateau. Think that's crazy? Well, it's a good move considering I get more room with the Ford van for hauling people and cargo. Forget about the gas bills. Maintaining two sedans and a van amounts to the same figure every month.

Reddy R. (*book publisher, who owns an E-150*): When it comes to space, I have no complaints about the Chateau. There's one bench more than the Expedition, more legroom and headroom, with the same engine and drivetrain. Plus, there is that psychological perk to having all that metal surrounding you.

Tessa: It competes with the Chevrolet Ventura, the Dodge Ram Wagon, and the GMC Savana Passenger Van. *Sayang* the high-torque, turbo-charged V8 is not available locally. It would have been a hit.

Controlled cruising

Tessa: We went way up North to Pagudpud passing the beautiful Patapat road when I had the E-150 months ago. It was a long trip but the ride was made more bearable because of the high comfort levels provided by the Chateau. Naturally we spent our life savings on gas, but the view from Patapat Road was [illegible].

Raymond: I made full [illegible] of the steering [illegible] cruise [illegible] We went to visit my brother-in-law in Batangas, and I had cruise control set at 90-kph through the bumpy and very-dangerous-at-night Southern Tagalog Access Road (STAR). Can Governor Mandanas do something about farm animals and people crossing the expressway? And at night, too!

Danny E: The E-150 has that distinct American car feel. It has a wide track and a long wheel base giving a very stable ride. The dashboard is very functional, but plain, by Japanese standards. I do like the seats that are firm and supportive, not cushy.

Samuel G.: I find nothing really appealing about the Chateau when you talk of styling. Why there are more *maporma* vehicles out there. *Pero* when you talk of functionality, nothing I have seen beats the E-150. Moreover, you've got the Ford dealer network to depend on. That is something other American van makers in the Philippines cannot compete with.

Reddy R: As a Ford owner I can't help but agree. They are may not be the fastest but they are surely efficient. My only gripe with the Chateau is the way the seats need to be removed. You have to pull a lever and take out the whole bench, which mind you is not light at all. It takes two people to remove and install the middle and rear benches.

Raymond: You tell me. It lacks the engineering inventiveness the Japs have for folding and tumbling seats. But just look at the thickness of the steel used for the seat legs and mounts. Definitely bulletproof.

Tessa: Does a mammoth van also emit "a feeling" of utmost safety when one is inside it? Do we fall into a false sense of security when we're in it? How about with all seats equipped with seatbelts, with second generation driver and passenger airbags, four-wheel ABS and side-door intrusion beams?

Reddy R: I don't like the tiny openings for the side windows. Doesn't work well in the Philippines? What happens when the aircon conks out? (My already had problems.) You'll have to literally sweat it out.

Tessa: The aircon was also the first casualty in our test units.

Raymond: There were complaints of engine overheating, too.

Tessa: So what do you say, with P1.3 million, is this a good buy, or "goodbye"?

In conclusion

When [illegible] to serious hauling [illegible] picnics and visiting the relatives. It should be the choice of customers requiring large capacity people transporters. For it's stellar role as a people mover, it gets a **9 out of 10** total points.

With standard equipment including high-capacity, dual-control air-conditioning; lights almost everywhere, cupholders and cubbyholes in every possible location, privacy glass; a chromed rear step-bumper; cruise control; trailer-towing packages; remote keyless entry; and power mirrors, windows and door locks, the Chateau gets peak points.

Raters agree that we don't like the limited window openings and the stubborn rear bench removal. Our wish list includes Ford's Autovision rear entertainment system, a reversing sensor and a pedal adjuster, like that found in the SuperCrew.

Zigzagging and radar guns

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

ONCE in a long while, columnists receive e-mail messages from readers that are so precious they deserve to be published in the original without any editorial comments. Below is one such sent by a doctor of medicine and titled "'Responsible Zigzagging'–Yeah, Right!"

"I used to ride big bikes in the late '80s. We had an informal group comprised of both young and old enthusiasts. Oh yes, we loved to show off our bikes when we gathered together–the more chrome the better. We would clean and polish our bikes until you could see your reflection in the paint; some were even crazy enough to wear black leather jackets in the heat of Manila. Despite all the shallow 'macho' posturing, however, emphasis was always placed on riding discipline. The older gentlemen (some were retired officers of the defunct Constabulary Highway Patrol Group) taught us the proper and safe way to ride our big bikes. Much of what we were taught was common sense and based on a need to consider road safety for not only ourselves but for others on the road.

"Zigzagging through slow-moving traffic would go against all I learned about riding safety. You may get ahead but at the risk of disorienting those whom you zigzag around. Plus, as anyone who has ridden a large motorcycle would know, it is much harder to control a slow-moving bike than one that is cruising–(a special skill we novices would try to develop then was to ride the bike as slowly as possible around pylons on a designated track). [illegible]ging through slow-moving [illegible] by an inexperienced bike jock on a large motorcycle would be a risk not only to himself but to those around him.

"Motorcycles can be safely ridden even on the tollways, but the rider should be a responsible one. Stricter regulation of motorcycle licenses (back then the guy at the Land Transportation Office checked the box that included motorcycles for a little cash and without so much as a test), maybe formal motorcycle riding schools and club registration may help to make the riding of motorcycles safer for riders and nonriders alike.

"As for me, I quit riding after three years. The dirt and the heat finally got to me. Sometimes, though, I think about getting back on a motorcycle, but my wife gently reminds me that I am grown up now."

Another reader, commenting on my "No More Racing on the Skyway" (PDI, July 26, 2001) column, faxed me that it gave him "the best laugh of the day" and explained why: "Some, not so many years ago, the South African Highway Police bought some very expensive radar guns and were loud in their claim that with these they would put a stop to speeding. Every one was very impressed. However, one day I was traveling in the car of a friend who like me was very knowledgeable on radar systems. We were caught in one of those radar traps. We than asked the radar operator to focus on a large block of flats nearby and the radar gun said that the block of flats was traveling at 5 miles per hour. FACT.

"The police after further tests then scrapped all their radar guns and bought infrared guns. These worked well until a marketer put on the market a windscreen sticker, which lit up when targeted by an infrared beam. Oho. Even then the I/R gun was far more accurate.

"Even then, the police reverted to a less scientific method of planting under the tarmac a figure-of-eight loop, not normally visible to the driver. This was even more accurate than the I/R system. BUT, those who knew how and were fitted with alternators were able to De-Gaus their vehicles. Oh oh oh.

"For your eyes only, the Spanish have solved the problem. They have insured that their streetlights are spaced at an exact distance apart and their helicopters can now time the speed of vehicles below. My daughter's husband was caught that way outside Madrid."

Keep those e-mails coming!

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: All people smile in the same language.

* * *

(E-mail comments to aida_sevilla@pacific.net.ph)

Slow isn't always safe

BY RAYMOND B. TRIBDINO

WEEKS ago, a balding, middle-age man claiming to be a law enforcer of the Philippine Safety Action Force (whatever that is) confronted me while I was buying a burger at the Petron station on South Super Highway. He claimed that I caused him great stress by flashing my headlights much too often and that I tailgated him.

Naturally, I was taken aback by his accusations. First I told him I was not tailgating him. And the truth is I was not. I was merely following him, two cars away, resisting the bad habit of overtaking on the median—a habit formed after years of dealing with dodo drivers on the South Expressway.

Then I explained that I flashed my headlights on three occasions to inform him of my presence and that I did it only when there was clear road in the slow lane. He did not comment, but was civil enough to acknowledge that I did flash my light only thrice. He was however adamant that he had every right to be traveling on the fast lane because he was moving at the minimum 60 kph.

"Isn't it posted that 60 kph is the minimum speed for all vehicles?" he asked.

Something seemed to have snapped in my cranium because I blurted out a deafening "what?!?" I went on to explain how driving at 60 kph on the fast lane could not only cause undue stress to drivers 60 cars down the line, it would also substantially slow down traffic.

"Driving below the pace slows down cars exponentially," I told him. "Consider that at 60 kilometers per hour the last car on the lane would be at a standstill." He didn't listen and kept saying he was right. He was traveling at the minimum speed limit and therefore I was the daredevil driver wanting to throw him off the highway by flashing my headlights.

SDFS

Nothing came out of the conversation, and I am sure that person still drives at 60 kph on the fast lane during rush hour. And he is not alone. I've noted that as many as 90 vehicles guilty of driving slow on the fast lane during my daily trips home. That's about 3.75 cars per kilometer from Alabang to Canlubang. These slow drivers, whether driving cars, trucks, buses or owner jeeps, have a lot to do with the safety of our highways and enforcers should do a better job apprehending them.

The anguish the slow driver on the fast lane (call him the SDFS) is causing other road users way down the line is terrible. Not only is the highway made more inefficient because traveling time, including pollution and gasoline consumption, is increased, but safety is also reduced considerably.

ANALYSIS

Along the length of the SLEX and the North Expressway are signs that read "No Overtaking On The Median Lane." That's road speak for "No Passing In the Slow Lane." But why are most drivers forced to do this? It's simply because a lot of drivers refuse to yield or do not have a sense of pacing required for highway driving.

Accidents

Even the most civilized drivers are guilty of this. And the simple reason is that an SDFS starts off a vicious cycle over illegal overtakes and fast lane braking, which are both nerve-racking and dangerous. Once a car passes an SDFS on the outer lane, and another car signals its intentions by flashing its headlights, the slow car is caught in the middle causing a rash of middle-lane overtaking.

I've seen many an accident, or near accidents because of a single SDFS. The most recent one involved a rushing Tritran bus and an owner jeep with red plates and with a Laguna police ID hanging on the rearview mirror. The Lucena-bound bus came in fast (I was a passenger sitting in front), flashed its headlights thrice and waited for the slow-moving jeep to move to the open middle lane. The owner jeep refused to budge for the next 5 or so kilometers so the bus driver instinctively moved to the right lane for an overtake.

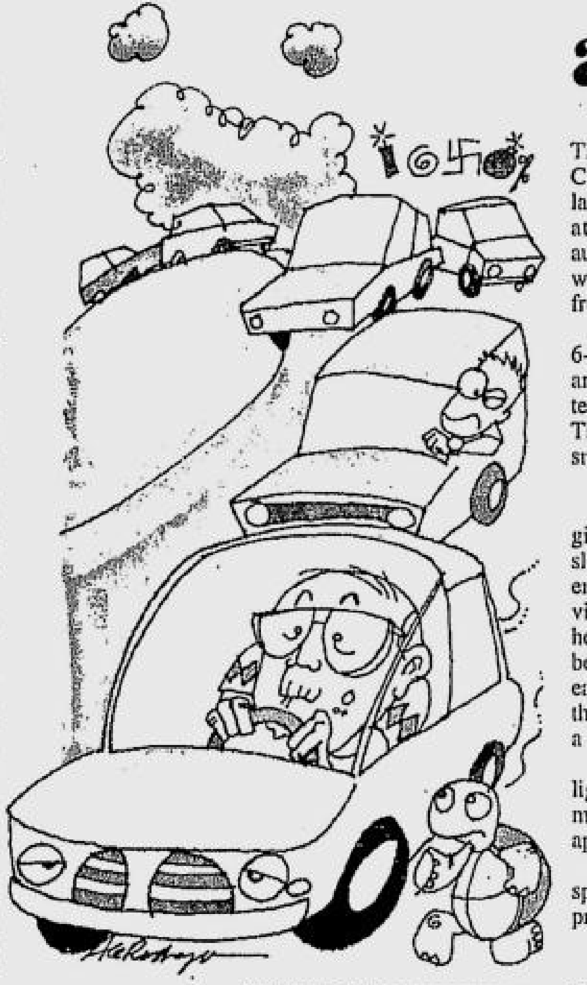

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

Needless to say, the owner jeep moved into the slow lane with the bus, causing the driver to panic brake right back into the fast lane.

Again, the Philippine driving culture is to be blamed. Driving defensively here means nothing and simply "steering clear" of problems just doesn't seem to cut it anymore.

Easing traffic

A good way to ease traffic and keep pace is to keep distance—two cars at least when traveling at 60 kph. When this rule is followed strictly, cars can then keep up to speed. It's a pretty basic rule of driving, but it's often forgotten because of distractions like cell phones, onboard video systems and a hectic lifestyle.

The recommended space might be one car length per 40 miles an hour. It's better to have at least double that, especially if you're traveling at 100 mph or faster. However given the carrying capacity of our highways, this might not be possible.

A slow driver on the fast lane is just running into a brick wall. It's oftentimes immovable. And the best way to get around an SDFS is to go around it via the middle lane, which is another unsafe proposition. Therefore, we are left with one option.

Take out the slow driver on the fast lane.

BMW 5 Series gets new look and new 6-cylinder engines

THE NEW BMW 5 Series, voted "Executive Car of the Year," is in the Philippines. The latest 525iA, recently presented to the public at a simultaneous launch held at all authorized BMW dealerships, is equipped with an advanced 6-cylinder engine and a fresh new look.

The new 2.5-liter in-line, 192 bhp 6-cylinder engine is not only more powerful and refined, but also introduces a new technology called electric throttle or 'e-gas.' This advanced innovation results in an even smoother and more responsive gas pedal.

Stunning new look

The face-lift of the new BMW 525iA gives a stunning new look to the already sleek lines and streamlined silhouette further enhancing its enduring elegance. The most visually striking new features are the new headlamps with ellipsoid technology (low beam) and luminous rings. These surround each of the four main headlamps and perform the parking light function giving the 5 Series a uniquely striking image.

The kidney grille and taillights, with new light conductor technology, have also been modified to give the car a more refined appearance.

The new BMW 525iA is available as a special "Executive" model and is currently priced at P3,435,000.00.

Special features

As an "Executive" variant, the new 525iA is enhanced by several features. To begin with, the car's handling is better than ever with Servotronic, a power-steering system that results in a sportily tight drive feeling and more precise steering at high speed. And in inclement weather, rain sensors automatically switch on the windscreen wipers and controls wiper frequency by itself as a function of rain severity.

Xenon lights ensure excellent road visibility as it is three times more efficient and lasts five times longer than customary halogen headlamps.

Additional conveniences include the multifunction steering wheel (MFL), allowing the driver to activate the air circulation, and car stereo system among other features, without having to remove his hands from the steering wheel.

BMW 5 Series

The 525iA Executive also has electric seat adjustments with memory for driver's seat. Both front seats can be adjusted electrically and the memory for driver's seat allows the driver to set the seat to a personal position. The seat memory capacity stores three individual adjustments that can be recalled at any time.

Additional features have also been added for internal safety, 10 airbags provide all-around protection to the driver, front and rear passengers including protecting the head and upper body in a collision from the side.

And for esthetics, the new 525iA comes with a new-design 16-inch factory-fitted alloy wheels.

Significant step upward

The BMW 5 Series, which is the first production car in the world with a full aluminum suspension system, has occupied the top positions in almost all comparative tests conducted by automotive journals since its launch five years ago. After five years of uninterrupted leadership in the top automobile category, the BMW 5 Series is now moving a significant step upward with the current model revisions.

The 2.5-liter gasoline engine that powers the new 5 Series is from BMW's new-generation straight-six engine family developed to provide more power, flexibility and refinement. ...

The new engine produces significantly more power throughout its operation range than its predecessors through the adoption of double Vanos infinitely-variable four-valve technology and a new intake system which minimizes flow losses. In conjunction with a new electronic throttle, this translates into enhanced responsiveness, lower vehicle emissions and excellent fuel economy.

At 192 bhp, its peak output is 13 percent greater than the similarly sized 523iA engine it supersedes. However, its real performance gain comes from a much "beefier" torque curve, with at least 85 percent of it 245 Nm available between 1,500 rpm and 6,000 rpm.

Motolite car wins Auto Summit 2001 award

THE WINNING Motolite car entry is flanked by Motolite representatives.

THE SLEEK Motolite car entry won the Custom Modified Class at the Auto Summit 2001 held recently at the Festival Mall in Alabang, Muntinlupa City. It is a fully modified 1996 Honda Civic Vti, with a turbo kit installed and a NOS 50 shot for unparalleled speed.

The car is controlled by a mobile computer installed inside, with a full ACS 5, DVD setup and a working Play Staion 2. The blue and white leather interior matches the car's unique blue-violet exterior paint, as designed by owner Joseph Tiu, a car enthusiast from Toronto, Canada.

The crowning glory of this powerful and extremely attractive car, however, is its dual overhead cam (DOHC) engine powered by Motolite and its awesome sound system, also powered by two Motolite batteries.

Woe to North Luzon Expressway users

FULL TANK

Al S. Mendoza

BAD news for users of the Northern Luzon Expressway. Reason: The NLT's rehabilitation has been postponed for three years.

The postponement was "due to forces beyond the control" of the Manila North Luzon Tollways Corp. (MNTC), which won the right to rehabilitate the long-dilapidated express(?)way.

The MNTC is owned by the Lopez Group, which controls Meralco. It said it was temporarily abandoning the project "because of *force majeure.*" It said it failed to get financing for the project. Can you believe that?

The Board of Investments management committee has endorsed the approval of the plan but the BOI board of governors did not immediately act on it.

Made sense, if you ask me.

Why buy an alibi outright without first verifying its veracity?

The governors said they wanted to make sure if the delay of the project's implementation can be considered *"force majeure"* or was caused by unforeseen events beyond the MNTC's control.

The Northern Luzon Expressway's rehabilitation was forged under a joint-venture agreement between First Philippine Infrastructure Development Corp. (FPDIC) and the PNCC. The FPDIC owns 60 percent of the MNTC; the remaining 40 percent is owned equally by the PNCC and the French firm Egis Projects S.A.

* * *

It's been years since our motorists started negotiating a badly damaged diversion road like the Northern Luzon Express(?)way. When it opened to the public in the '60s, we heaved a sigh of relief. For decades, we labored through hours of torture negotiating the outmoded McArthur Highway from Monumento to Tarlac. The NLT was a boon to Northerners, indeed.

When news broke out that the Lopez Group had won the right to rehabilitate the NLT some years back, there was euphoria all over. Never mind that there were some wranglings while the bidding war was on. The Lopezes survived them all, and since they have a track record of good performance, I applauded their victory.

But how come the Lopezes were now seemingly bungling the NLT's rehabilitation project? What really happened?

The BOI should really dig deep into the matter. The public's welfare is seriously at stake here.

* * *

My next dream car is really the Echo Verso. If I had my way, I would have opted for it this Christmas. Unfortunately, it's out of stock. Or I'm just way off the line in the "order of merit."

The Echo Verso, not really good-looking by Filipino standards (Filipinos love exterior looks more than the interior looks—a bad habit if you ask me), is Japan's Car of the Year for two straight years in 1999 and 2000. It's a 1.3-liter engine; its VVT-I, DOHC 16v and EFI engine makes the Echo Verso the car of the times. It's even a futuristic car since its engine power can be almost equaled to that of either the 1.6 or 1.8!

If I'll have the luck, I'll try to secure one on Valentine's Day—if not on my birthday in 2002.

Do I see Sol J smiling?

* * *

The Echo Verso is manufactured at the Takaoka Plant in Toyota City, Japan.

Speaking of Takaoka, the factory boasts of the "Rakuraku Seat," a breakthrough in car manufacturing.

The "Rakuraku Seat" was developed based on a worker's suggestion to allow workers to work in a posture and to minimize their working distance. The seat allows a worker to "move around" on board the "Rakuraku" inside the vehicle being attended to. It's perfect for assembling parts in the interior of the vehicle.

The seat won the director general's award of the science and technology agency of the Japanese government in April 1994.

* * *

Do you know that the Ford SuperCrew is the only under 8,500-pound gross vehicle weight (GVW) truck in its class, with four full-size doors and a full-rear passenger compartment, combining room, comfort and thoughtful features with a sizeable pickup box?

"The F-150 SuperCrew is designed for discerning consumers who need all the capability of a Built-Ford-Tough pickup plus room for passengers with four full-size doors," said Paolo David, Ford Group Philippines' product planning manager. "And its 5.5-ft. box and optional bed extender create a full 7 ft. of cargo carrying capacity, ensuring even more versatility."

* * *

QUOTE ME. **There's a whale of a difference between "driving without a license" and "driving without your license."**

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Mercedes-Benz
The future of the automobile

Prestone launches grand raffle contest

PRESTONE, the No. 1 brand in the brake fluid industry, shows its gratitude to its loyal clients for years of patronage through a new raffle promo called "Basta Prestone Lovers, Lucky Winners."

Win up to P100,000 in cash, apart from colored TVs, VCD players, and a kitchen package with this new grand promo. Just buy any of the following Prestone products to join the raffle: 170-ml, 300-ml, or 1-liter Prestone Brake Fluid, or 500-ml, 1-liter or 3-liter Prestone II Longlife Coolant Concentrate.

Enclose in an envelope a foil seal of Prestone Brake Fluid or the container cap of Prestone II Longlife Coolant Concentrate. At the back, write your name, address, telephone number, signature, the name of the outlet or store where you made your purchase, the outlet/store address, and the name of the clerk or attendant. You can drop your entries in designated drop boxes at stores and outlets, or mail to "Prestone Lovers, Lucky Winners," Clorox International Philippines Inc., 15th Floor, JMT Corporate Condominium, ADB Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City.

Five winners will get P100,000 each for the first prize and P50,000 for the second prize. There will be 10 winners of P25,000 each for the third prize.

Five outlets, meanwhile, will win one 14" colored TV each for the first prize and one cellular phone each for the second prize. Ten winning outlets will get a kitchen package each for the third prize.

Store clerks or attendants will automatically be given special prizes just for selling Prestone products. There will be five winners of one VCD player for the first prize and one cellular phone for the second prize. Ten winners will get one sack of rice each for the third prize.

Other special prizes to be given away are 14" colored TV units, VCD players, other household appliances and Prestone T-shirts.

The five winners for each raffle will be picked from the following regions: NCR, North Luzon, South Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. Winners will receive telegrams about details where they can claim their prizes.

The promo ends on Jan. 15 next year. The grand raffle draw will be held on Jan. 31 at the CIPI Bicutan Plant, Mindanao Textile Compound, Severina Industrial Estate, Bicutan, Parañaque.

'Honda Christmas Rush' promo

THIS Christmas, Honda Cars Philippines Inc. offers Civic and CR-V buyers a holiday treat with the "Honda Christmas Rush" promo. Civic VTi-A/T NTi-S buyers get a great holiday treat with a full comprehensive motorcar insurance for the first year, absolutely free. On the other hand, buyers of the Civic 1.5 LXi MT/AT and Civic VTi M/T get a 50 percent discount on full comprehensive motorcar insurance for the first year. Meanwhile, the CR-V comes with a video CD entertainment system and a hard spare tire cover, all for free.

With this promo, Honda gives customers more value for their money with its two best sellers—the Civic and the CR-V. Japan's 2001 Car of the Year, the new Civic VTEC 3 boasts of an innovative design with its spacious flat rear cabin floor, advanced safety features and a technologically advanced engine that balances powerful and superior performance with fuel efficiency. The CR-V has the unique Real Time 4WD system and a 4-wheel double wishbone suspension that provides great stability and comfort for a smooth drive and ride.

The Civic is available in 1.5 LXi MT/AT, 1.6 VTi MT/AT and 1.6 VTi-S (ANT) variants in colors taffeta white, satin silver, milano red, iced teal pearl, dark emerald green, titanium metallic and night hawk black (available in 1.6 VTi-S only). For the CRV, only standard colors taffeta white, ruby red, cypress green metallic and heathermist silver are available for the promo.

Of car . . .

(From page B5)

reminded to follow simple guidelines and yet, we often take them for granted. These pointers include the following:

- Never drink and drive.
- Never let friends drive drunk.
- Never hold a child on your lap—you could crush him in a collision.
- Never try to belt yourself and someone else with the same safety belt.
- Never tuck the safety belt of a car behind your shoulder.
- Never put infants or children in the front seat of the car if your car has a passenger side airbag.
- Never go anywhere in an automobile without making sure everyone in the car is buckled in safely, even if it's just down the street.
- Never drive when you feel sleepy. Pull over and get some coffee or stop and take a rest.

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DTI imposes cash bonds on ceramic tile imports

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry has imposed a provisional cash bond on imported ceramic wall and floor tiles under the Safeguard Measures Act to stop the influx of competing imports into the country.

Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel Roxas II said the provisional cash bond was pegged at P5.40 per kilogram and would be in effect for no more than 200 days.

Roxas said the duty would not be imposed on imports from selected developing countries. The countries exempted are Thailand, India, Sri Lanka and Iran which constitute less than 3 percent of the country's total ceramic tile imports.

Roxas said the government would first notify its peers in the Asean, particularly in Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore, before provisional duties would be slapped on ceramic imports from these countries.

Under the Asean common effective preferential tariff agreement, the Philippines is required to notify the Ministerial Level Council and consult with concerned governments.

The ceramic tile industry filed a protest with the DTI against the surging imports of floor and wall tiles, both glazed and unglazed, which was said to be causing serious injury to local players.

Under the Safeguard Law, an import surge inflicts harm on a certain industry through a declining market share, falling sales and profits, increasing finished goods inventory, and underutilization of production capacity.

The ceramic tile industry is the second group to take advantage of the safety nets accorded by the Safeguard Act to protect against dumping by foreign rivals. Early this month, the DTI imposed a provisional tariff worth P20.62 per 40-kilogram bag on imported cement. The Philippine Cement Manufacturers Corp. (Philcemcor) is confident local cement manufacturers would claw back as much as 14-percent market share with the favorable decision by the DTI.

The separate appeals of the cement manufacturers and tile makers have been endorsed by the DTI to the Tariff Commission for final review. The two industries are asking for more permanent measures such as quota restrictions or prohibitive tariffs in repelling unfair competition from overseas.

SM mall to rise in Clark

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE—Retail giant Henry Sy is putting up in Clark economic zone next year his second SM mall in Pampanga.

The Clark mall was estimated to initially cost P2 billion.

Emmanuel Angeles, Clark Development Corp. president and chief executive officer, said Sy's SM Holdings Inc. would sign the lease contract early next month.

SM Clark, the second in Pampanga after SM City in San Fernando, will be built on a 25-hectare lot located just next to the zone's main gate.

With the scheduled construction of an SM mall in the area, owners and operators of 20 duty-free shops in Clark have started relocating their shops near the proposed SM site. Operators of duty-free shops in Clark believe the SM mall will help boost their sales.

It was not yet clear if SM would also import duty-free goods, a privilege that Clark locators enjoy.

In another development, the Atlanta-based United Parcel Services began the construction of its computerized sorting warehouse in Clark on Tuesday.

UPS, a package delivery firm, intends to start the operations of its $500-million Asian operations in Clark on April 5 next year, Angeles said.

In another development, Angeles said CyberCity, one of Clark's 19 biggest American locator-firms in information and communication technology, has gone full stream in its expansion bid which would employ 6,000 workers in the next three years.

On Expo Pilipino, Angeles said talks were underway between Disneyworld and AsiaKonstrukt for the construction of a theme park in the area. AsiaKonstrukt is the government's partner in developing the centennial centerpiece. Expo Pilipino was closed in 1999 due to declining number of visitors.

Still, the Expo is reopening on Feb. 14 as an education and entertainment center.
Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk

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Privatization seen to raise ₱2B for gov't

By Clarissa S. Batino

AFTER failing to meet its P10-billion privatization revenue target this year, the government is adopting a more conservative target of P2 billion for next year.

Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho said the government would likely raise only P1 billion this year from the disposal of small-ticket real estate assets.

"We are targeting only P2 billion in privatization revenues for next year. Assets that were not sold this year will likely be disposed of next year," Camacho said.

Among the assets that the government will attempt to sell next year are the state's 10-percent stake in Manila Electric Co., a 90-percent stake in Philippine National Construction Corp., a piece of property owned by Food Terminal Inc., a Makati property presently housing the International School, a stake in the Philippine Postal Corp. and certain assets and equity in RPN-9 and IBC-13.

"These assets are definitely worth more than P2 billion but we decided to adopt a conservative target because we do not know what the market condition will be next year," said the finance secretary.

The 10-percent stake in Meralco, for instance, was scheduled to be sold last year but a slump in the stock market had prompted the government to postpone its sale. Originally worth about P9 billion, the value of the government's share in Meralco is now down to almost half.

Metro . . .

(From page B1)

"I don't have the latest from Ric (Pascua) but my understanding is that he continues with that effort. If he puts in an offer, we'll look at it at an objective basis," he said.

As the board has accepted Pascua's request to go on an indefinite leave, Pangilinan will assume the responsibilities of acting CEO. In addition, First Pacific executive director Edward Tortorici would assist him in the ongoing initiatives at MPC.

Meanwhile, MPC chief finance officer Jose Ma. Lim confirmed that Ayala Land Inc. had submitted an improved offer for a 69.6-percent stake in BLC but declined to give details. He said prospects on the negotiations with other interested groups have likewise improved.

The Gokongwei family's Robinsons Land Corp. also earlier disclosed that it had submitted an offer for the BLC stake.

"The process continues. We expect these discussions to continue for two to three weeks. I'd like to think we're making progress with both," he said.

Lim, however, said there was no definite timetable yet on when a decision would be made. The offers are currently being evaluated by MPC's financial adviser ING Barings.

For its part, ALI disclosed yesterday that as part of the consideration it was willing to pay for the acquisition of all the direct and indirect interests of MPC and First Pacific in BLC, it offered to transfer its less than 15.8-percent stake in Metro Rail Transit Corp.

"However, there has been no definitive agreement reached between MPC/FPC and ALI on the terms and conditions of ALI's offer, in as much as discussions between ALI and MPC are still ongoing," the ALI disclosure said.

This developed as MPC yesterday announced that it had incurred a consolidated net loss of P2.21 billion for the nine-month period ending Sept. 30 this year, mainly due to higher financing charges arising from the refinancing of convertible debts of BLC and MPC.

"Our focus going forward is to address the level of debt," Pangilinan said.

He clarified that MPC's debt stood at only P12 billion but consolidated debt would amount to about P17.8 billion, including the debt of Fort Bonifacio Development Corp. and BLC.

Of the P12 billion, only P7 billion was owed to third-party creditors while the remainder represented the bridge financing provided by First Pacific early this year to refinance the BLC convertible bonds.

"There are assets and businesses that will be used to address the P7 billion," Pangilinan said.

"FBDC has enough assets to sustain its cash flow. The objective is really to reduce by half the P7-billion debt by the second quarter of next year," Lim said. "There's a whole range of assets, properties, leases, receivables that could raise cash."

He said MPC had P9 billion worth of immediate sources of liquidity that could be used to retire debts and ease debt servicing burden.

Plan . . .

(From page B2)

evaluation of the inspector's billing and have already agreed on an amount lower than billed.

The amount was already net of the P2.8 billion that Philippine National Bank had paid on behalf of the Bureau of Customs which forms part of the settlement deal involving the bank's P25-billion loan with the government.

Business groups believed that without a third-party import surveillance firm, smuggling could worsen as importers could deliberately or unwittingly misdeclare their imports or underdeclare the value of their goods.

US downturn to be short-lived, OECD says

WASHINGTON—The US economy is in a sharp downturn, which has been made worse by the Sept. 11 attacks and the tailing off of high-tech businesses, but it should be able to recover by mid-2002, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development said on Tuesday.

The OECD report was prepared before Monday's declaration by the US National Bureau of Economic Research that the United States entered a recession in March but concluded one was virtually certain.

"The economy now seems likely to have entered a recession, albeit one that should prove short-lived," the OECD said. It added that swift action by policymakers to boost spending and ease taxes as well as cuts in interest rates should spur a pickup in activity by the middle of next year.

"Assuming that no further disruptions will come from political and military developments, real GDP is projected to grow around 3/4 percent year-on-year in 2002, but close to 2-3/4 percent through the year," the OECD concluded.

Further down the road, the OECD sees a good chance growth will further accelerate in 2003 as pent-up consumer demand is unleashed and an overhang in capital stock is worked off.

"But in the interim, the cyclical downturn is projected to generate a rapid rise in labor-market slack, with the unemployment rate reaching 6-1/4 percent on average in 2002 before it reverses course," the OECD said. The US unemployment rate in October was 5.4 percent.

The report said the US slowdown developed in stages as investment spending slowed and manufacturing slumped, and that the final stage was the devastating impact from the Sept. 11 attacks that leveled the World Trade Center in New York and damaged the Pentagon.

"A fundamental reason for the initial slowing appears to have been the gradual realization that parts of the 'new economy' were not going to deliver profits on the scale that had been expected," the OECD said. That led to a drop in share prices, which meant less investment in information equipment.

"The end-result was a sharp slowdown, accentuated by a normal stockbuilding cycle that was largely concentrated in the manufacturing sector," the OECD said.

There were some positive factors, including the fact that productivity or output per worker appeared to be holding up well.

"Despite the downturn, there is evidence that the improved growth of trend productivity seen in the second half of the 1990s has been maintained," the OECD said. *Reuters*

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Shoppers back but hungry for bargains

NEW YORK—Thanksgiving week sales lured bargain-hunting consumers into stores, two reports suggested on Tuesday, but economists said one robust week was not enough to signal a holiday season boom for ailing retailers.

Sales in the two days after Thanksgiving are crucial to US retailers, not only as a barometer of holiday sales but also because they help them determine the price discounts that are likely to yield maximum revenue.

The Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi/UBS Warburg retail chain store sales index, which measures weekly sales through Saturday, recouped the preceding week's losses, rising 0.9 percent after a 0.5-percent decline in the week ending Nov. 17.

The index is now back to where it stood in late September, but at 393.1 is still well below the 402.1 seen in the week before the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States.

Separately, Instinet Research's Redbook Average rose 2.4 percent in the three weeks to Nov. 24, driven by a pick-up in post-Thanksgiving sales, after a 1.5-percent rise in the previous period.

"Consumer spending over Christmas probably won't be that strong because people are losing their jobs," said William Dudley, chief US economist at Goldman Sachs. *Reuters*

NEC, Matsushita may develop 3G phones in China

TOKYO—Japan's Matsushita Communication Industrial Co. Ltd. and NEC Corp. said Wednesday they might develop third generation (3G) mobile phone handsets in China on the back of rising demand.

"We are in talks about it, but there are a lot of things to be discussed and nothing has been decided yet," said a Matsushita spokesperson.

"When we announced an alliance with NEC in August, we said we wanted to expand abroad. This is part of that plan. China is a big market with a lot of potential," he said.

But Matsushita Communication still faces difficulties in China after installing software in regular mobile phones that referred to Taiwan as an independent country.

"Because of that problem we have lost the chance to sell phones there this year," the spokesperson said, adding that he hoped the issue would soon be resolved.

NEC echoed the joint goal to build 3G phones in China.

"We have heard that they are going to start a 3G mobile phone service by 2003. China is going to be a big market and we would like to be part of it," said a spokesperson for NEC.

NEC and Matsushita are in discussions with a number of local mobile phone makers about setting up a joint venture, "but it is all in the early stages," according to Matsushita's spokesperson.

The Nihon Keizai newspaper said earlier NEC and Matsushita would establish a 3G business in China this year and aimed to start selling handsets by 2003 in a bid to boost their share in the world's largest mobile phone market—with 120.6 million users. *AFP*

Drug makers welcome WTO talks

GENEVA, Switzerland—The International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association said it welcomed what developed to be difficult WTO negotiations in Doha, Qatar over the launch of a new round of multilateral trade negotiations.

IFPMA said the results of the discussions on the intellectual property aspects of the debates reflected a balanced interest to encourage innovation in new drug therapies and vaccines while seeking to promote improved access to medicines.

"The Doha declaration, which is a political rather than a legal or binding instrument, recognizes that patents, trademarks and trade secrets are essential to the growth of the global economy and vital to the improvement in the lives of people in the developed and developing world," IFPMA director Harvey Bale said.

"Earlier drafts of the declaration reflected certain negative elements of the debate. However, the final text maintains the current legal provisions of TRIPS, underscoring the global need for continued research and development into HIV/AIDS and other life-threatening diseases," Bale said.

The separate Doha text on TRIPS and public health states that all members of the WTO agree to adhere to the TRIPS agreement and abide by its mediation and arbitration decisions.

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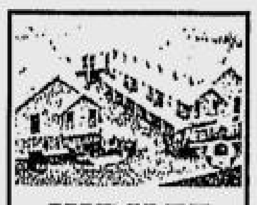

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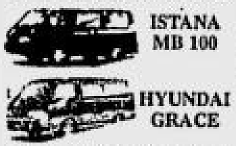

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NOTICE OF LOSS

Tax Credit certificate
#006119 series of 1996
amount P2,032,586.00;
#006268 series of 1996
amount P227,749.00

Issued by Department of Finance said Tax Credit Certificate is lost and shall no longer be honored or accepted in payment of any liability to the government.

(PDI - Nov. 29, 2001)

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

THIS IS TO INFORM THE PUBLIC THAT THE FOLLOWING PERSONNEL ARE NO LONGER CONNECTED WITH **PRIME MANPOWER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT, INC.:**

Precious C. David

Jennifer D. Bravante

Victor M. Bayani

Karen R. Santos

THIS NOTICE IS FOR POEA COMPLIANCE

ERRATUM

Republic of the Philippines
PROVINCE OF ALBAY
CITY OF LIGAO
OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL MAYOR
Agrarian Reform Communities Development Project

In our ad re: Invitation to Bid for the Construction of Tastas Multi-Purpose Center, published in this paper November 14, 2001, item # XII should have been included to wit:

Item	Scope of Work	Quantity	Unit
XII	Roof & Rooframing plan	118.56	sq.m.

Office of the Mayor
Province of Albay, City of Ligao

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Address: Unit 2411 Herrera Tower Herrera Street, Salcedo Village Makati City

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LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that an Extrajudicial Settlement of the Estate of Amando Tang with Deed of Absolute Sale has been executed by his heirs per Doc. No. 204, Page No. 42; Book No 31;Series of 2001 before Notary Public Ezra M. Leano of the city of Manila (PDI -November 22, 29 & December 6, 2001)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE ESTATE OF THE LATE ELIGIO BAISA HAS BEEN EXTRAJUDICIALLY SETTLED AMONG HIS HEIRS AS PER DOC. NO. 63; PAGE NO. 14 BK; NO. XII; SERIES OF 2001 OF NOT. PUB. E. GENCIANA OF MANILA
PDI-Nov. 15, 22 & 29, 2001

Notice that heirs of Jorge Santos Viola executed extrajudicial settlement of his estate dated November 8, 2001 per Doc. 327, Page 66, Book V, Series of 2001 acknowledged before Notary Public Gallardo S. Tongonan of Quezon City.
PDI-Nov. 15, 22 & 29, 2001

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is hereby given that the Stock Certificates No.19545 (for 211shares) & No.26113 (for 21 shares) of Banco Filipino Savings & Mortgage Bank, issued to Ma... Celia F. de los Reyes, were stole /lost and are now beyond recovery

PERSONAL

THANK YOU SACRED HEART OF JESUS AND IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY

THANK YOU HOLY SPIRIT

THANK YOU ST. JUDE

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"DEATH ought not to be called death,
but the beginning of LIFE"

PURIFICACION PUYAT GOPENGCO

Has peacefully joined her Creator after receiving the last rites of the Holy Catholic Church on the Feastday of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal on November 27, 2001 at the age of 81.

Her late husband Justice **Simeon M. Gopengco** (†); her bereaved children **Oscar & Malou Rodriguez**; grandchildren **Trisha**, **Yvette**, **Marco**, **Javi** and **Miguel**; sister **Leoncia Puyat Reyes**; nephews, nieces and other relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Capilla dela Virgen, Sanctuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park, Makati.

Interment will be on Sunday, December 2, 2001 at Loyola Memorial Park, Parañaque after the 2:00 p.m. Mass at Sanctuario de San Antonio Parish.

Eternal
life
will
swallow up
that which
can die.
God made
us for this
very
reason and
He has
given us
the Spirit
as a
guarantee
that we will
live again.
2 Cor. 5:4-5

NORMA HERNANDO ABRAHAM

1 July 1941 — 23 November 2001
Manila, Philippines **Pennsylvania, U.S.A.**

*Peacefully joined her parents **Marcos V. Hernando** and **Socorro Asuzano Hernando** and brother **Herminio** into the arms of our Lord.*

Her husband **Gerald Abraham**; and sons **Marc Charles Cure** and **Lee Alexander Cure**; brothers **Cesar, Mario**; sister **Rebecca**; sister-in-law **Teresita**; stepsons **Richard** and **Douglas**; aunts **Purita** and **Julie**; nephews and nieces **Marco Reza, Jeremiah Jerome, Maria Elizabeth, Carlo Marco, Catherine Isadora,** and **Raymond Francis** request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul. Before her illness, she was administrative assistant to the Dean of the School of Law, University of Villanova, Pennsylvania, U.S.A. Her cremated remains will be brought to the crypt of the Twin Hearts of Jesus and Mary Church in early December in Quezon City, Philipines.

In Loving Memory
On the third death anniversary of

Jose P. Dans Jr.

September 26, 1928 - November 29, 1998

The 6:00 pm Mass will be offered in the following Churches:

Mt. Carmel Shrine
Doña Juana Rodriguez Ave., Q.C.
St. Paul The Apostle
Mother Ignacia Ave., Q.C.
St. James The Great Parish
Ayala Alabang
Parish of the Hearts of Jesus & Mary
West Triangle, Q.C.
Santuario de San Antonio
Forbes Park, Makati
Christ The King
E. Rodriguez Sr. Ave., Q.C.
Sacred Heart Parish
Kamuning, Q.C.
Good Shepherd Parish
Fairview, Q.C.
Sta. Maria della Strada
Katipunan Road, Q.C.
National Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes
Quezon City
Parish of the Holy Sacrifice
University of the Philippines, Diliman, Q.C.
Center For Migrant Youth
Cordillera St., Q.C.

WE DESIGN OBITUARIES FOR FREE.

Our Dearly Beloved

ARISTON M. HUERTAS

Died in the Grace of Our Lord on November 27, 2001 at the age of 85.

His bereaved wife **Socorro**; children **Minlang** and **Danny**, **Ato** and **Fely**, **Nora** and **Armando**, **Peter** and **Myrna**, **Tess** and **Larry**, **Jun** and **Leonila**, **Melit** and **Ricardo**, **Lando** and **Nancy**, and **Danny** and **Angie**; daughters and sons-in-law, grandchildren, brothers, sisters, nephews, nieces, other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

Interment will be on Saturday, December 01, 2001 at 2:00 p.m. at Loyola Memorial Park, Parañaque City.

PEDRO C. GUZMAN

of Enrile, Cagayan
January 16, 1936 — November 26, 2001

His wife **Lording**; children **Lyndon** and **Chona**, **Grace** and **Willy**, **Judith** and **Gerry**, and **Mimi**; brothers **Berting**, **Boni**, **Momoy**, **Ramon**, **Andy** and **Tonie**; sisters **Soling** (†), **Margot**, **Fely** (†), and **Bernadette**; grandchildren, nephews, nieces, other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Marian Memorial Chapels, Marcos Highway, Antipolo City.

Interment will be at Heaven's Gate I Memorial Park, Antipolo City. For further details, please contact telephone no. 6451845 loc. 14.

"I was glad when they said to me, - Let us go to the Lord's house -
And now we are here, standing inside the gates of Jerusalem!"
Psalm 122:1-2

We lovingly remember
our Dad, our beloved mentor

DOMINGO M. GUEVARA

(January 02, 1909 - November 29, 1999)

He left us two years ago to go back to his Creator and to join his loving wife, Carmen. We kindly request his friends, relatives and all readers to pray for the eternal rejoicing of his soul as we offer Holy Masses at the following places:

Guevent Multi-Purpose Hall, Mandaluyong City	4:30 pm
Santuario de San Jose, Greenhills, Mandaluyong City	7:15 am
St. Francis Parish Church, Shaw Blvd., Mandaluyong City	6:30 am
Cardinal Santos Medical Center Chapel, San Juan	5:15 pm
Our Lady of Fatima Parish, Mandaluyong City	7:00 pm
Mary the Queen Parish, Greenhills	6:00 pm
Shrine of Mary, Queen of Peace (Our Lady of Edsa) Ortigas Ave., Q.C.	12:15 noon
Center for Peace Asia Foundation, Inc. Mandaluyong City	12:15 noon
Holy Redeemer Parish, Malac cor. Inaman St., Masambong, Q.C.	6:00 am

---

It was like each raindrop turned into dazzling little lights with his laughter...
With the passing time, we have not for a single moment, forgotten...

Catalino "Nonoy" A. Ortiz

of Butuan City & Balayan, Batangas
Who peacefully joined his Creator on November 29, 1990

In loving memory of his **ELEVENTH DEATH ANNIVERSARY**; We, his family, wife **Maria Estelle Garcia - Ortiz**; and children and all who knew him in life, request pious readers to join us in remembering him in our prayers. Holy Masses will be offered at the following:

ORTIZ Family Mausoleum, *Himlayang Pilipino, Tandang Sora*	10:00 AM
Santuario de San Antonio, *Forbes Park, Makati City*	6:00 PM
Sta. Rita Parish Church, *Philam Homes, Quezon City*	6:00 AM
Immaculate Concepcion Church, *Balayan, Batangas*	6:00 AM
Sto. Niño Parish, *Libertad, Butuan City*	6:00 AM
St. Joseph Church, *Aurora Boulevard, Quezon City*	6:15 AM
Our Lady of Miraculous Medal, *Proj. 4, Quezon City*	6:00 AM
Sta. Clara Monestery, *Katipunan Avenue, Quezon City*	6:00 AM
Madonna dela Strada, *La Vista, Katipunan, Quezon City*	6:00 PM
Sto. Niño de Paz, *Greenbelt Chapel, Makati City*	7:15 AM
Our Lady of EDSA Shrine, *Ortigas Avenue, Quezon City*	6:00 PM
Holy Family Church, *Glendale California, USA*	8:00 AM
St. Joseph Church, *Maple Place, Keyport, New Jersey, USA*	8:00 AM
Shrine of Immaculate Concepcion, *Washington DC, USA*	8:00 AM

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People, Events & Products

ARIES B. ESPINOSA, Assistant Editor

aespinosa@inquirer.com.ph

Philips sponsors educational rooms for public schools

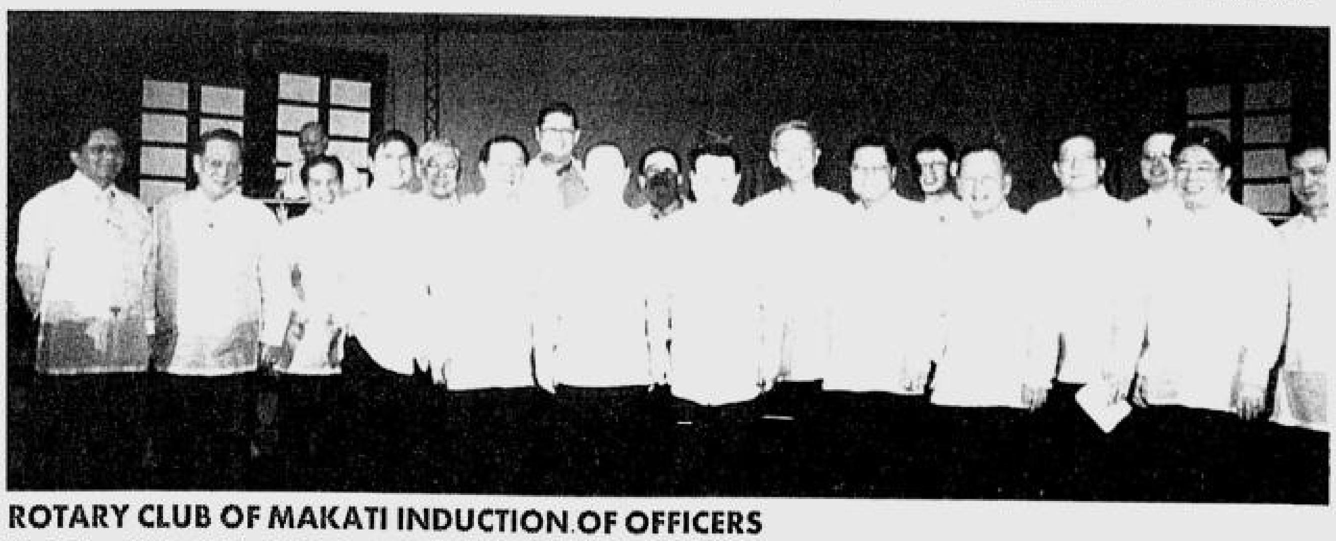
Philips Philippines has announced that it will sponsor 10 Philips Educational Rooms as part of its "Philips, Education and People" (PEP), a program which aims to contribute to uplifting the Philippine educational system by improving the country's public school facilities. The announcement was made during the inauguration of the first of the rooms located at the Padre Burgos Elementary School in Sta. Mesa, Manila.

The Philips Educational Room is equipped with Philips products, such as a TV, a VCD player, a VHS player, educational VCDs, complete lighting fixtures and computers. It will be available to all students to serve as their one-stop electronic library for learning and data gathering.

During the event, Philips president and CEO Pratt Hsu and Department of Education Secretary Raul Roco also signed a memorandum of agreement to formalize a partnership for the PEP program. Under the agreement, DepEd will predetermine schools which will benefit from PEP.

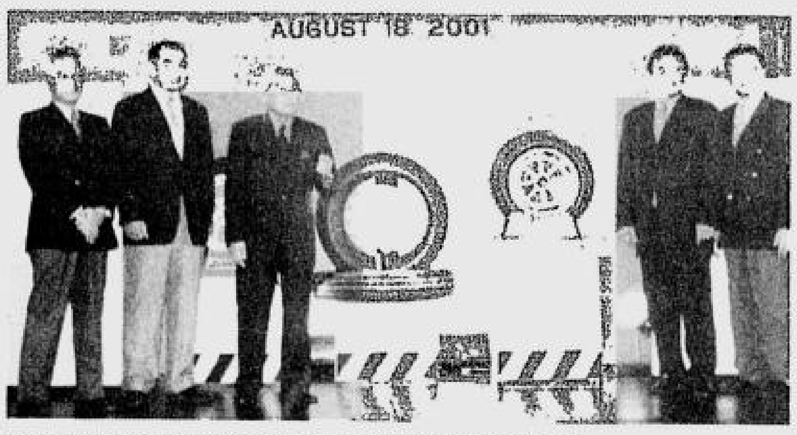
Philips BMI Team chair Andrew Yan said in a speech that PEP and the educational room will give public school students the much-needed access to simple but basic technological tools.

"We feel that since we are already aware of the importance of educating the youth, we might as well give them a well-rounded education by providing them with the means with which to acquire new technological know-how," he added.



ROTARY CLUB OF MAKATI INDUCTION OF OFFICERS

The Rotary Club of Makati, RI District 3830 recently inducted its officers for 2001-2002. Shown during the ceremonies are, from left, Rolando G. Roque, Jose Marie G. Estrada, Jorge Naval, directors; Federico Borromeo, vice president; Conrad G. Marty, treasurer; Robert Kuan, president elect; Tito Panlilio, advisers; Juan Carlos Jr. (president); Mon Diokno, secretary; Juan Carlos Sr. (father of the president); Roland O. Young, immediate past president; J. Antonio M. Quila, adviser; Victor L. Caparas, director; Ricardo G. Librea, adviser; Danilo E. Ignacio, director; Isidro G. Garcia, Carlos Rufino, advisers; and Rene Benitez, director.



RENEWED CONFIDENCE IN RP MARKET

Bridgestone, a world leader in the tire manufacturing industry, sees potential in the Philippine market. To prove this, it recently launched the new and improved SMR Light Truck Bias Tires and GR50 S&S AQ Donuts Passenger Car Tires. AQ Donuts or the Advanced Quality Driver Oriented New Ultimate Tire Science is a revolutionary tire technology which keeps tires in tough shape even when wet and worn out. This prestigious launch was held at The New World Renaissance Hotel, Grand Ballroom recently. Gracing the event were officials from Bridgestone Japan and Singapore, as well as dealers from all over the country.

Ateneo hosts Esea confab on English

THE ATENEO de Manila University Department of English hosts the 6th English in South East Asia (Esea) Conference from Nov. 29 to Dec. 1 this weekend. This year's conference, which is being held in the Philippines for the first time, will be addressing concerns that deal with the theme of "Learning to Teach, Teaching to Learn: Issues, Options, Directions in Language and Literature Education."

Teachers of all levels, scholars and critics of language and literature, textbook and creative writers, educators and policy-makers will find much to participate in. Speakers and facilitators from all over the country, Southeast Asia, Australia and Europe will look into contentious and continuing concerns such as the politics of teaching English, curriculum or syllabus design, classroom practice, and teaching English in a multilingual environment.

The international conference begins each day with an authoritative voice of a pillar in language and literature education, research, and publication from the Philippines, the United Kingdom and Malaysia.

Dr. Edna Zapanta Manlapaz of the Ateneo de Manila University represents the country as keynote speaker. She holds double degrees in AB English and BSE from the College of the Holy Spirit, each with a magna cum laude. She earned her Master's Degree in English Literature at the Catholic University of America and her doctorate at the University of Pennsylvania.

Dr. Christopher Brumfit, professor of Education at the University of Southampton, United Kingdom, comes to the conference with experiences of teaching, working with, and mentoring children, teenagers, graduate students, and professionals in Britain, Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe and Canada.

Dr. Malachi Edwin Vethamani, lecturer and teacher-trainer at the University of Putra Malaysia, has written numerous essays and articles in local and international publications. He will speak on "New Englishes, New Literatures in English: Challenges for ELT Practitioners."

The 6th Esea Conference promises to rise to the challenges of providing answers or extending learning in language and literature education in English and to put the Philippines, travel advisory and political uncertainties notwithstanding, on the conference circuit map.

For further inquiries, call Jossie at 426-6120 or the Ateneo trunkline 426-6001, or e-mail esea@admu.edu.ph or doe@admu.edu.ph.

INQUIRER TRiViA

By BONG BARRAMEDA

Weight and see

Q. Is it true that a pound of feathers is heavier than a pound of gold?

A. Yes -- because there are two systems for measuring weight. One is the avoirdupois pound, which contains 16 ounces. The other is the troy-weight pound, containing only 12 ounces. Feathers, and most other large and course commodities, are measured by the avoirdupois system. Gold and other precious metals and stones are measured by the troy system. Thus, a pound of feathers actually weighs four ounces more than a pound of gold.

For the Record. To produce 1 troy ounce of gold (about 1/15 pound), nearly 2 1/2 tons of rock must be processed. In fact, all of the gold mined in recorded world history could fit into a cube with 53-foot sides. And let it be added that pure 24-karat gold is so soft that it must be mixed with another metal to make it durable enough for jewelry. It turns reddish when mixed with copper, bluish when mixed with iron, and it forms white gold when nickel is added.

What's the Difference? **Enquire** and **Inquire.** Both spellings are acceptable, although *inquire* is more widely used. Similarly, the noun *inquiry* is preferable to *enquiry. Enquire (enquiry)* is sometimes used for the act of questioning, whereas *inquire (inquiry)* refers to a more detailed or prolonged questioning, an investigation.

WORD WATCH

Asikaso: from the Spanish *hacer caso,* 'to mind, pay attention to.'

PAF flying course for reservists

CERTEZA

AIR FORCE Col. Rene Certeza, Commander of the Philippine Air Force (PAF) Reserve Airlift and Tactical Support Group (RATSG) recently announced the start of the flying course initiated by the 3303rd Reserve Air Reconnaissance Squadron, which is the military unit designation of Certeza Surveying and Aerophoto Systems Inc., a PAF-affiliated unit headed by Rhonda Certeza.

The class is composed of PAF reservists who are business executives, professionals, civilian members of RATSG and a group of medical doctors from St. Lukes Hospital who are RATSG supporters. They will be forming the Flying Doctors Team, similar to the Australian and African Flying Doctors. Using light aircraft capable of landing on short airfields, they will be able to respond to medical emergencies in areas not easily accessible. RATSG is the flying arm of the PAF Air Reserve Command under Col. Roberto Ricalde.

The class is composed of reservists Rhonda Certeza, Joel Cruz, Jojo Perrenoud, civilian members Roberto Ricalde Jr., and Vincent Garcia. RATSG supporters Dr. Raymund Figuerres, Dr. Jose Torio, Dr. Patrick Mendiola, Dr. Jaime Tamayo and Dr. Romel Almoro.

This activity is in line with PAF Chief Lt. Gen. Benjamin Defensor's strategic goal for the PAF having a faster, stronger and better Air Force Reserve to respond to the call of the service. This justifies the meaning and credence of the PAF as the "First Force"—always rising to the challenge whenever and whatever.

Clips

Ever-Gotesco invites blood donors

A BLOOD-LETTING project called "Give Blood, Save Life" will be held today, Nov. 29 at Ever-Gotesco Commonwealth Center and Dec. 6 at Ever-Gotesco Ortigas Complex from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Everyone is invited to donate blood. The activities are joint projects of Ever-Gotesco Malls and Go Tong Foundation, in cooperation with the Philippine National Red Cross and Bisig Bayan Foundation.

PLAI general assembly

THE PHILIPPINE Librarians Association Inc. (PLAI) is inviting all members to attend its general assembly on Nov. 30 in Manila Midtown Hotel, Pedro Gil corner M. Adriatico Streets, Manila from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. A fellowship luncheon will culminate the National Book Week celebration at 12 noon.

GBS poetry reading

CALLING all certified virgins—poetry virgins, that is. Be part of a different poetry reading session that calls for skill, creativity, and candor. Christened "Virgins' Night", it features four young unpublished poets and their works. Nelson Agustin, Yce Camacho, Dexter Lira and Conrado Virina will be reading not only their original poetry but also works that have inspired them. An open mic reading will follow to allow the audience to participate. The event will be held at the Café Literati on the third floor of Goodwill Bookstore, Glorietta 3, Ayala Center, Makati City, today, Nov. 29 at 6 p.m. Admission is free.

Alvarez opens Autostop Asia 2001

DOTC Secretary Pantaleon Alvarez will be the special guest during the opening ceremonies of Autostop Asia 2001, the 2nd International Automotive Aftermarket Parts & Accessories, Garage, Refinishing and Workshop Equipment & Tools Trade Exhibition today, Nov. 29 at the World Trade Center Metro Manila. The exhibit runs until Dec. 2. Autostop Asia has already gained wide acceptance by automotive enthusiasts who look for a one-stop shop exhibit featuring cars, car accessories and supplies and automotive parts. For more information, call IIR Exhibitions Phils Inc. at 750-8588.

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MASTERCARD PRICELESS PROMO SUCCESS

MasterCard International has concluded its highly successful Priceless Passions promotion in the Philippines. The winning entries were picked in a raffle draw that had the participation of executives from several local member financial institutions. The promo ran from June 15 to Sept. 15. 13 MasterCard holders won cash and consolation prizes worth over P1.4 million. Shown are MasterCard International executives Judith Dayrit (second from right), marketing and member relations relations director, Gert Batocabe (right), member relations representative, and Anton Corro (fourth from left), operations manager, together with representative from the Department of Trade and Industry.

SINGAPORE AIRLINES AT BAZAAR

First Daughter Luli Macapagal-Arroyo (fifth from left) visited Singapore Airlines' (SIA) booth at the 2001 International Bazaar held recently at the World Trade Center in Pasay City. Singapore's Ambassador to the Philippines Jacky Foo (fourth from left) and SIA's marketing communications and services manager Rita Dy (sixth from left) joined the First Daughter. SIA offered free use of 500 kilos capacity of cargo space for transporting the goods used for the Bazaar, as well as two round trip economy class tickets for the raffle draw. Also shown are (from left) Dr. Su Yumian, wife of Ambassador Foo, Vice President and Foreign Affairs Secretary Teofisto Guingona, 2001 International Bazaar chair Ruth Guingona, and Lovely Romulo. SIA is a regular participant in this annual charity project.

BSP GOV DONATES TROPHY

The Bank Marketing Association of the Philippines (BMAP) is holding the fund-raising golf tournament "BMAP Swing for Hope" at the Midlands Golf Club today, Nov. 29. Shown is Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura (third from left) turning over his donation, the Perpetual Cup, for the charity event to BMAP president Gerry Diaz of Banco de Oro. Also shown are (from left) Randy Aruta of Planters Development Bank, golf committee chair Jimmy Yu of Banco de Oro, special projects director Maureen Abelardo of Skoal Communications and director Cathy Alonso of PSBank.

Jewellery Philippines opens

JEWELLERY Philippines 2001, the 4th Philippine International Jewellery, Jewellery Equipment and Accessories Exhibition opens today, Nov. 29, and runs until Dec. 2 at the World Trade Center Metro Manila. Co-organized by the Guild of Philippine Jewellers Inc. and IIR Exhibitions Phils Inc., Jewellery 2001 boasts of the leading jewelers as well as jewelry equipment and supplies companies. For more information, call IIR at 750-8588.

Blue Eagles in silver homecoming

BLUE-BLOODED Ateneans are invited to the Silver Homecoming splash today, Nov. 29, 8 p.m. at Strumms Makati. Come in your best blue gear for a fun-filled evening of body shots, beer and Blue Eagle spelling. The splash is hosted by the Boys of '77 and the Girls of '81. Buy your tickets at Strumms Makati.

Japanese banks' cleanup too little, too late

AP

A YOUNG Japanese woman chats on her cell phone as she passes by a signboard of stocks in downtown Tokyo. Pulled down by an overnight slip on Wall Street, the benchmark 225-issue Nikkei stock average lost 2.96 percent to close the day at 10,624.81.

TOKYO—Saddled with rising bad loans and slumping stock portfolios, Japanese banks are in crisis and recent pledges to clean up their accounts are too little, too late, analysts say.

Banks are speeding up their write-off of bad loans, but new bad loans are emerging at an even faster rate. The write-offs are also threatening the capital bases of banks, increasing the likelihood new public money will need to be injected into lenders.

"I think we already have a banking crisis, the banking share prices look as if we are in a crisis," HSBC financial analyst Brian Waterhouse said. "The market is telling anyone who will look at it that the investors don't believe the numbers."

Japan's 14 major banks have said they aim to write off around 6.4 trillion yen ($53 billion) in bad loans by March, over three times an earlier target, but the figure falls far short of disposals five years ago as they struggle to find funds amid a deep economic slump.

"We are supposed to think they have this new aggressive posture when actually they are writing off less than they did before," said ING Barings banking analyst James Fiorillo.

Interim results unveiled by Japan's 14 major banks showed losses or huge profit drops as they attempted to meet a government goal of reducing the level of non-performing loans—cited as a root cause of Japan's decade long economic slump—on their accounts to safe levels within two to three years.

Despite their best efforts, the mountain of bad loans continues to grow as more borrowing turns sour, analysts say.

HSBC's Waterhouse puts the total level of NPLs held by major banks at over 30 trillion yen—double the official figure given by the government financial regulator—and warns the level will rise.

Mizuho Holdings Inc., the world's largest banking group, wrote off 1,037.5 billion yen in NPLs in the six months to September—up by 690.5 billion yen from a previous target—and pledged to dispose of 1,150 billion yen in the second half.

However, the level of NPLs at the bank swelled to 6.24 trillion yen in September against 4.56 trillion yen at the end of March.

"It is getting worse faster than the banks can deal with it," said Fiorillo.

NPLs at rival lender Mitsubishi Tokyo Financial Group Inc. rose to 4.64 trillion yen in September from 4.53 trillion yen at the end of March.

"The economy is bad. More and more companies are going under these days. Banks have to revise upward their projections for bad loans," Naoto Onagiri, a banking sector analyst at BNP Paribas, said.

The government's Financial Services Agency is conducting special inspections of banks' balance sheets to make sure banks are correctly categorizing NPLs—those made to bankrupt or nearly bankrupt companies—in a bid to regain market confidence. *AFP*

Japanese economy darkens on ratings blow, weak data

TOKYO—Japan's bleak economic outlook darkened further on Wednesday as Standard & Poor's downgraded its sovereign rating, and retail sales data for October showed a seventh straight month of decline.

The international ratings agency's decision to downgrade Japan's long-term debt ratings by one notch to AA, comes hard on the heels of a similar action by rival agency Fitch two days ago amid growing frustration over a lack of tangible progress in Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's structural reform policy.

"Although marginal progress may be achieved, Standard & Poor's expects further significant weakening of both the Japanese economy and the government's fiscal position before more radical action is taken" S&P said in a statement.

Earlier, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry said retail sales fell 4.9 percent from a year earlier. That was the biggest drop since January 1999 and worse than most in financial markets had expected.

The dismal figures served as yet another reminder that the world's second-largest economy was probably already in its fourth recession in a decade, while the S&P move underlined the uphill battle the government faced in containing its ballooning debt.

S&P said the government's efforts to prop up the ailing economy would further worsen its fiscal position and predicted that public debt would rise toward 175 percent of gross domestic product by mid-decade from around 130 percent now—already the worst among industrial countries.

"Japan's sovereign credit ratings could be downgraded further if the government's debt dynamics continue to worsen," S&P said, keeping its credit outlook for Japan on negative. *Reuters*

Microsoft tries to end its monopoly game, but some refuse to give up

SAN FRANCISCO—Software titan Microsoft Corp., after years of fighting off monopoly charges, is now spending its recent days trying to settle allegations of anti-trust behavior.

But a growing number of opponents just won't play along.

Tuesday, Microsoft announced it was waiving its right to a European Commission hearing on anti-competitive practices.

The case mirrors charges brought by US anti-trust attorneys, who have charged that the company uses its overwhelming market share in computer software to ruin its competitors.

Microsoft's Windows operating system—also called OS—is the crucial software that enables a computer to run other applications.

Windows is installed on almost 95 percent of the world's desktop computers.

"We announced today in Brussels that we would waive our right to an oral hearing in the European matters and focus on continuing the dialogue with the commission," spokesperson Vivek Varma told AFP by telephone Tuesday.

A hearing had been set for Dec. 20 and 21 on the probe launched by the European Union.

Among other things, the commission is investigating whether Microsoft deliberately designed its new Windows XP system so it would not inter-operate with other companies' software for items such as media players for audio and video. *AFP*

Intel more confident of meeting Q4 targets

SCOTTSDALE, Arizona—Intel Corp., the world's largest chipmaker, is confident it will meet fourth-quarter revenue forecasts of between $6.2 billion and $6.8 billion but is less certain when the current economic downturn will end, chief financial officer Andy Bryant said on Tuesday.

Speaking to Reuters on the sidelines of a technology conference hosted by Credit Suisse First Boston Technology here, Bryant said management was "getting more and more comfortable every day" with its projections of fourth-quarter revenues of between $6.2 billion and $6.8 billion in the current quarter that ends in December.

Wall Street analysts, on average, forecast revenues for the No. 1 semiconductor maker of $6.56 billion, near the midpoint of its forecast range.

Intel stock rose 44 cents to $32.31 after earlier falling to as low as $30.90 on Nasdaq. So far this year, Intel has risen 6 percent, compared with a 7.7-percent decline in the Philadelphia Semiconductor Index.

The move in Intel stock helped push the Nasdaq into positive territory in afternoon trading, but the tech-laden index ended down 0.27 percent to 1,935.97.

Bryant said the Sept. 11 attacks and the subsequent business downturn had made forecasting more difficult.

In addition, after having to make several warnings over the past year that results would fall short of official forecasts, Bryant said Intel now felt safer offering broad ranges rather than more specific numbers in its financial guidance.

"What you have to understand is that when you give narrow range (forecasts), you open yourself up to a lot of time in court," he said.

As for the current recession, which has hurt virtually all technology companies, Bryant said he was confident it would be followed by a period of sustained growth—eventually. He said the timing of that remained unclear though.

"We have come to the conclusion that we're no better than anyone else when it comes to doing that kind of forecast," he said. "Figuring out the near-term picture is pretty tough."

Intel, along with the rest of semiconductor industry, has suffered a bruising year of falling sales and profits as the $200-billion industry has been mired in its worst-ever downturn brought on by slowing economies and weak demand.

The company has a 78-percent share of the market for microprocessors, the primary computing engines of personal computers, and about 80 percent of its revenues come from the sale of microprocessors, chipsets and motherboards.

Global chip sales are forecast to tumble 31 percent this year from some $200 billion in 2000 but rebound slightly in 2002, notching a modest gain of 6 percent, then gaining steadily in the following two years. *Reuters*

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Vodafone exec named to head Japan Telecom

TOKYO—Japan Telecom Co. Ltd. will appoint Bill Morrow, the head of Japanese operations for majority owner Vodafone Group plc., to lead the nation's No. 3 telecommunications firm, a news report said Wednesday.

Vodafone, which became the 66.7-percent owner of Japan Telecom in September, had warned of executive changes after Japan Telecom posted a $43.2-million net loss in the six months to September.

Morrow, the 42-year-old vice president and country manager for Vodafone Japan, will replace president Haruo Murakami by the middle of next month, Jiji Press reported.

A Japan Telecom spokesperson declined to comment, but Vodafone's public relations representative in Japan said the Japan Telecom board was meeting Wednesday to discuss the matter and would make a final decision later in the day.

Analysts expect the takeover of control by Vodafone would help turn it around Japan Telecom by focusing on its loss-making fixed line service.

But they noted that J-Phone, Japan Telecom's mobile phone arm, already looks in good shape with an average monthly share of new subscribers of 25.4 percent in the September half compared with 16.7 percent in the preceding six months.

Japan Telecom came under full control of Vodafone after the mobile phone giant increased its stake to 66.7 percent from 45 percent in September in a bid to break into the huge Japanese mobile phone market. *AFP*

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11am - 12nn	Product Presentation	Inca Plastics Phils.
3pm - 4pm	Valugard: Total Auto Preservation	Valugard
4pm - 5pm	Business Opportunities in the Relaunch of Permatex in the Phils.	Permatex / Timken
30 November 2001		
2pm - 3pm	New Technology Tools & Equipment, Chemical Products & Assembly Systems For Use in the Automotive Industry	Centro-Aire Inc.
4pm - 5pm	Magnetic Treatment of Fuel	Taytan Int'l.
5pm - 6pm	Product Presentation	King Shoes Manufacturing
1 December 2001		
11am - 12nn	Brake Pads & Fuel Injection EFI	Quantum Spares
1pm - 2pm	New POLYGuard Bull Bars Launching	Liftruk Int'l Trading
2pm - 3pm	Universal Tools Presentation	Wiha Far East Company
3pm - 4pm	Defensive Driving Seminar	Nissan Motor Philippines
4pm - 5pm	Eyquem Spark Plugs Presentation	Eascorp Automotive
5pm - 6pm	Uniq Engine Treatment Product Presentation	Bizcom Int'l Corp.
2 December 2001		
3pm - 4pm	Product Presentation	Dayco Automotive Belts
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THE LEADER IN THE LAMINATING FIELD

UOB unit up for sale

By Elena R. Torrijos

A GROUP of Taiwanese investors is planning to acquire 100 percent of United Overseas Bank Philippines, the local unit of United Overseas Bank of Singapore, for $45 million, a person familiar with the matter said yesterday.

The Taiwanese group will put the $45 million in escrow this week with Rizal Commercial Banking Corp., according to the source.

UOB acquired a 60-percent controlling stake in UOB Philippines after buying the group of former Finance Secretary Edgardo Espiritu out of Westmont Bank in November 1999. It then renamed Westmont Bank into UOB Philippines.

UOB Philippines has been saddled with high nonperforming loan ratios. As of September, nearly P7 out of every P10 worth of loans it extended were rated "bad."

On the question of ownership, Espiritu's group is still staking a claim over UOB Philippines. It has accused UOB of failing to meeting its commitments.

Apart from UOB, the group of Jollibee Foods Corp. owner Antonio Tan Caktiong also has a stake in UOB Philippines.

UOB Philippines is currently the 25th largest commercial bank in the country. It has P16.8 billion in assets and P2.127 billion in capital accounts. It also has total deposits of P12 billion and net loans of P7.5 billion.

Earlier this year, UOB sold some of its branches to Union Bank of the Philippines.

In May, UOB shut down its local securities unit due to scarce trading opportunities here.

Last week, Bernardo said with the second failure of bidding, the committee would seek other ways to cover Napocor's insurance needs, including setting up a "captive" company to handle the policy.

NPC allowed to negotiate insurance pact

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo has allowed a joint committee handling the renewal of state-run National Power Corp.'s insurance policy to negotiate a contract.

Finance Undersecretary Antonio Bernardo said the joint committee would start evaluating technical proposals submitted on Nov. 19 by four insurance brokers.

"(We need to do this to be able to set) a benchmark for the negotiated contract," Bernardo said in an interview.

The four bidders for Napocor's insurance contract are Arthur J. Gallagher & Co., Heath Lambert, Marsh & McLennan, and Aon Energy.

The joint committee is expected to finish evaluating the proposals before the end of next month, Bernardo said.

Napocor's industrial all-risk policy covers $6.5 billion worth of assets.

Energy Secretary Vicente Perez Jr. and Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho earlier recommended to Ms Macapagal to allow Bernardo's committee to negotiate a contract for Napocor's insurance policy after its attempt to auction off a deal failed for a second time.

Ronnel Domingo

STI steps up expansion

SYSTEMS Technology Institute has stepped up its expansion efforts as competition in information technology education stiffens worldwide.

STI president and chief executive Chito Salazar said they were "cognizant of global competition" so they were really concentrating on expanding their reach as well as their services.

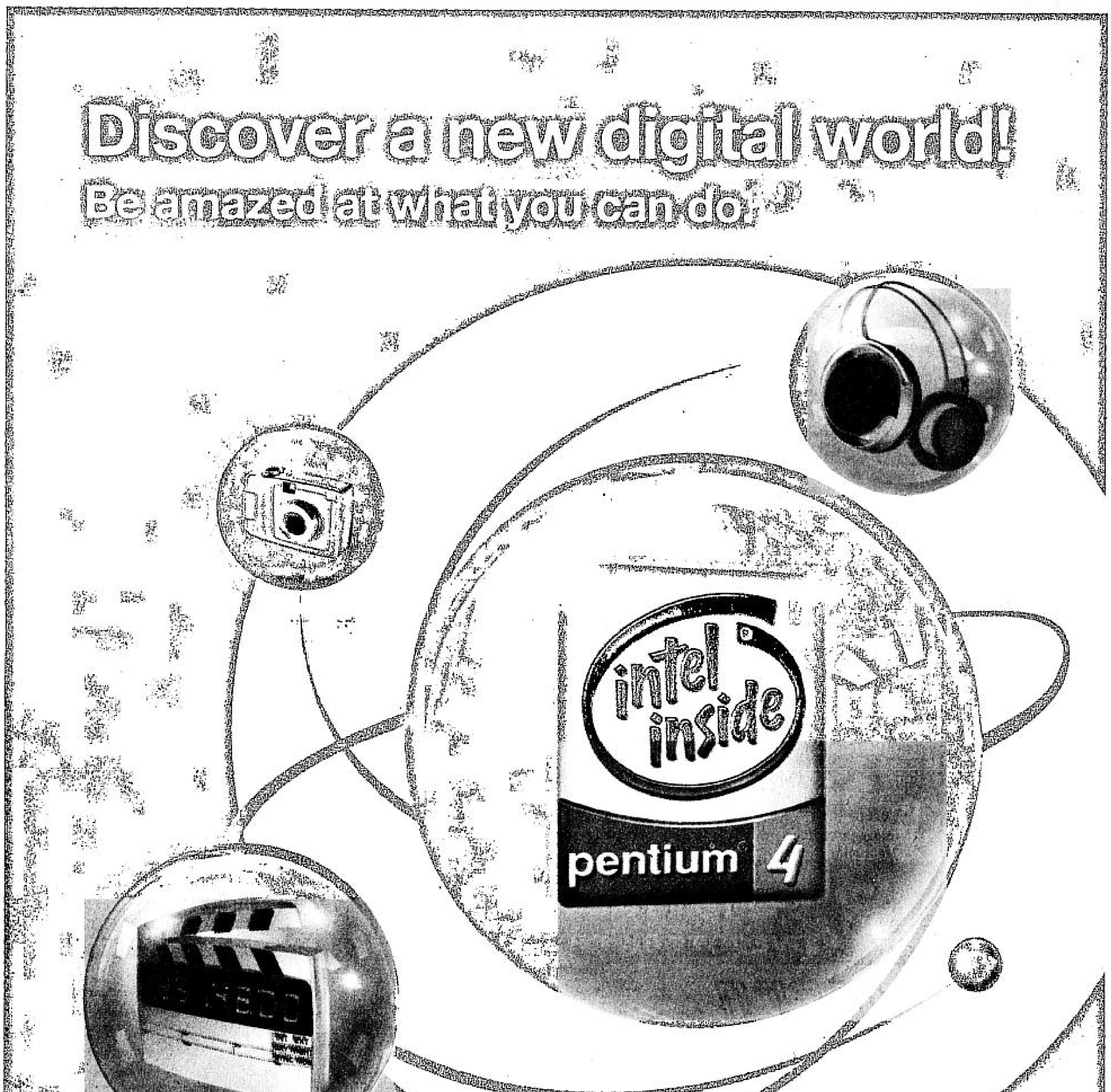
"This is in reaction to global competition. We believe that the Philippines has a good shot at being a global player in IT education," he said.

Salazar said STI's competitors in IT education include Informatics, Aptech, Genetics and NIIT.

STI vice president for marketing Jerome Bengzon added that with technology becoming more and more a part of people's daily lives, IT education also played a significant role in society.

"The choice of ICT (information and communications technology) as a career has grown. Technology has become more ingrained in people's daily lives. That's why our development plans had to be fast tracked," he said.

Abigail L. Ho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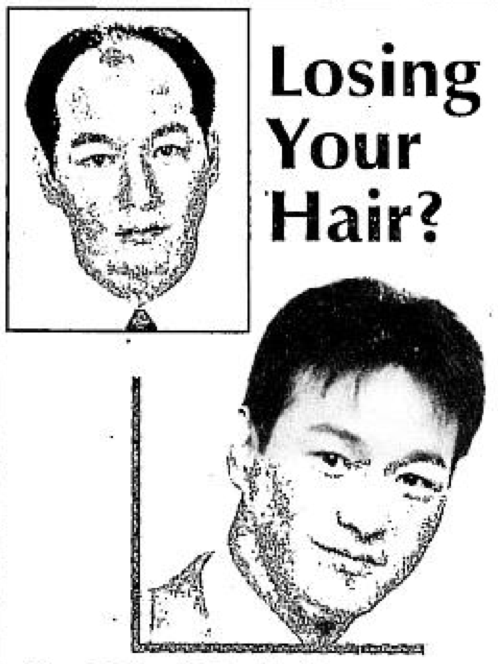

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CHELO BANAL-FORMOSO, Editor

LIKE WATER FOR CHOCOLATE. "The guest can feel the cook's mood."

Le femme in Le Soufflé's kitchen

BY CATHY BABAO GUBALLA
PHOTOS BY ROMY HOMILLADA

THE CONVENT'S loss is the kitchen's gain. As a young girl, Josefina "Jessie" Sincioco, part-owner of the tony gourmet foodie's haven Le Soufflé, wanted nothing else but to become a nun. "For the longest time that was all I wanted to be," she says with a smile.

LE FEMME/ p.C3

Jessie Sincioco presides at the tony Ortigas resto much like a happy camper

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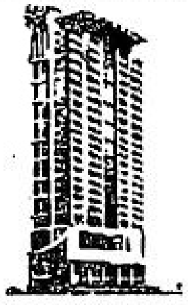

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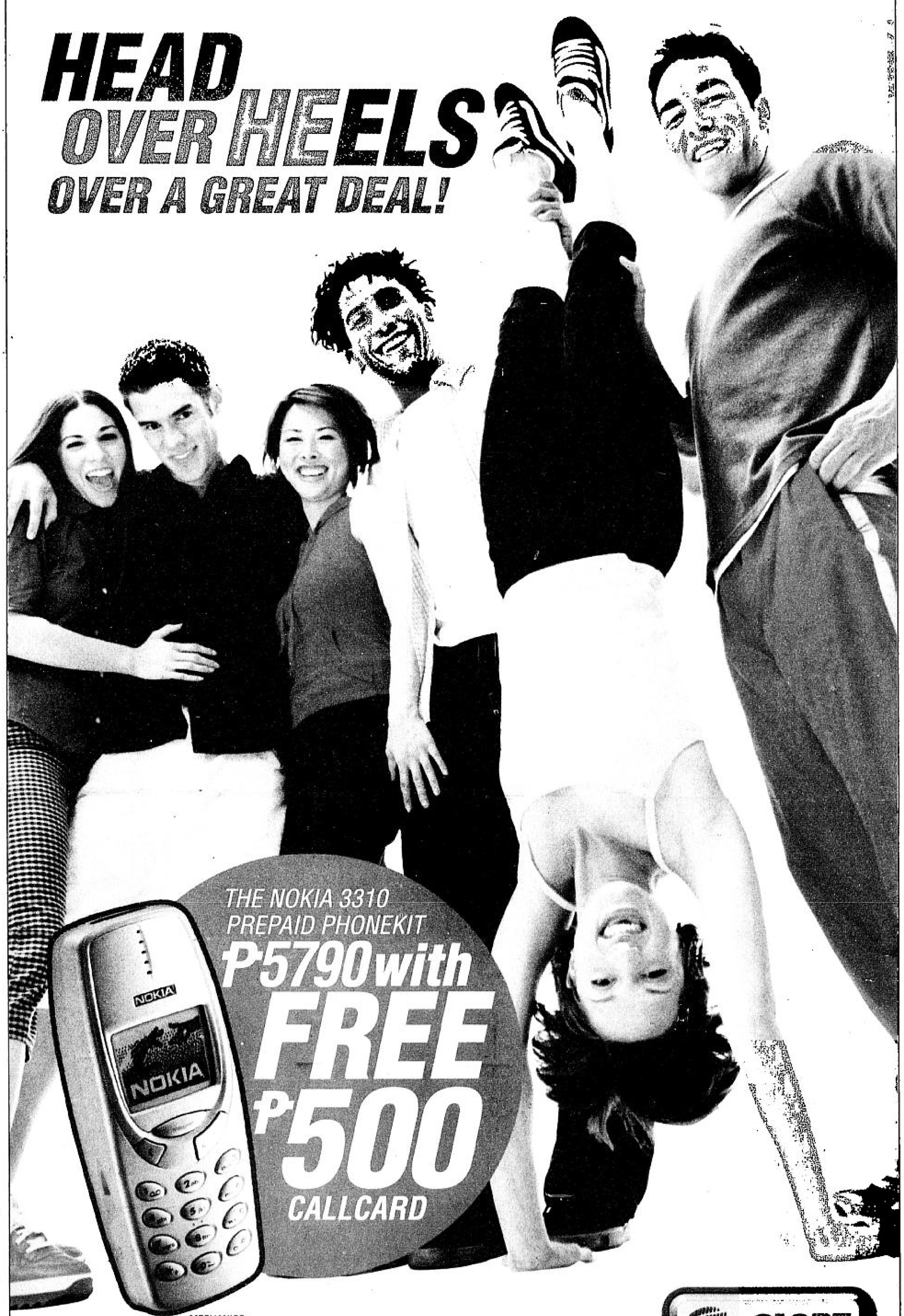

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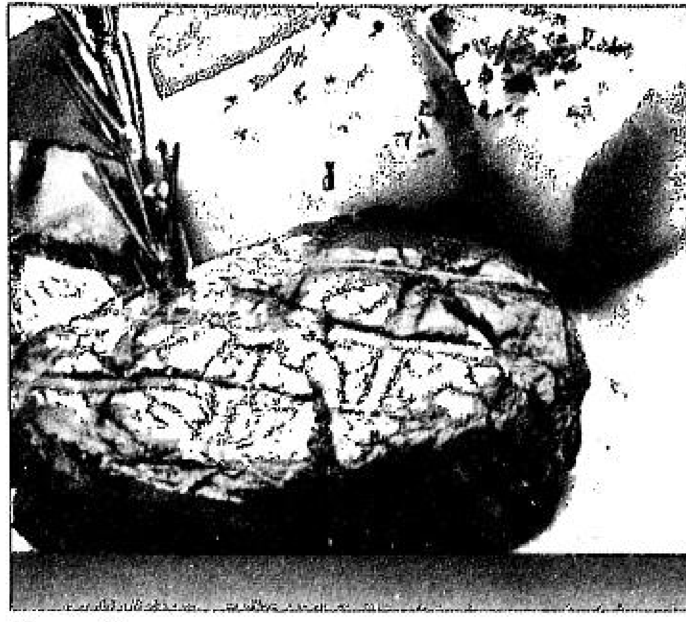

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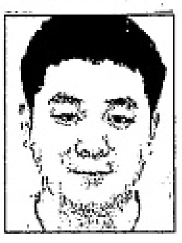
Will it work?

THE MAD TEA PARTY



Clinton Palanca

Manual
COFFEE

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

JUST as my father overpacks when he travels because he is perpetually anxious that something will go wrong and he will not have the means to deal with it, and just as he stocks up on toilet paper and razor blades because he fears (literally) getting caught with his pants down, I also have the same neurotic need for assurance that things aren't going to go awry. Whereas my father manifests this by stocking up on consumables such as tinned goods (my uncle once peered into our store cupboard at home and assessed: "At least two coups' worth"), or filling the petrol tank of the car when it is still more than half full, I tend to be more anxious about things not working. In a disposable culture of gimcrack and planned obsolescence, this becomes a maddening problem.

Coffeemakers

Let's take a very specific example, that of making a good cup of coffee; we can take as postulates that the beans are fresh (no more than 3 months old is a general rule) and recently roasted. There are many ways to turn a handful of beans into a cup of coffee.

The first, and most straightforward, is to grind them (preferably using the kind of grinder that crushes, rather than one that resembles a small blender, with rotary blades) into fairly coarse bits, like sand, and then pouring water over them and allowing the mixture to steep. The temperature of the water is a subject of debate, but the general consensus is that it should not be boiling (as it should be for tea) but just below: turn off the heat and count to 10 before pouring. (Those who live in higher altitudes, where water boils at a lower temperature, don't have to do this.) This is called infusion and is the simplest way to make coffee; variations like those complicated glass apparatus with alcohol burners and tubes that look like they could be used by an alchemist or terrorist are merely variations on the theme.) This method also produces coffee with the highest caffeine content of all.

> 'What my father and I are looking for is the same assurance: that when we need it, it will be there, and if it is a machine of some sort, that it will be in working order'

The second, and default option for most, is the drip method. The beans are ground to a finer consistency, and placed in a very fine filter, usually conical and made of disposable paper. Hot water is poured over, or piped over by a machine, and the results trickle down into a carafe. This is the sort of coffee found in diners, cafeterias, offices, lounges and hotel breakfast rooms. Freshly made, the coffee can be very good. After sitting on the warmer for a few hours, it reduces itself to an acidic liquid that can have you bouncing off walls and swinging from the chandelier. The caffeine content is pretty high; when partially evaporated, it can reach toxic levels.

The third method is to force steam through very finely ground particles of coffee. The higher the pressure of the steam, the more aroma is transferred to the resultant liquid. Most home "espresso" makers are not capable of generating a significant degree of pressure; they are on a par with the far simpler stovetop coffee machines that the Italians have been using for years, made of aluminum and consisting of two parts connected by a gasket in which the coffee is placed.

This method has two problems: the coffee must be "tamped," or pressed, to the right tightness (a matter of practice, like tamping tobacco in a pipe); and second, the gasket always, always manages to get lost. The resultant liquid, which should have a pale brown cream from the oil in the beans floating on top, has the least caffeine and most flavorful of all.

From here we move into the world of professional coffee machines, which can range to the little gray ones with a water receptacle about as inconvenient as that of the Dental-Pik, to the giant machines plated with shining brass that have an eagle on top and which look like they could be used as a float in a parade. Most are line-fed (water comes in through a hose); but they are divided into two very important sub-categories: manual and automatic.

Most coffee boutiques use the manual kind: the coffee is ground in a separate machine, tamped by hand, and then lodged into the machine, which produces a burst of steam. The automatic variety makes it as simple as pressing a button; pure espresso comes out through a spigot, which can then become café crème, latte, cappuccino, half-caff macchiato with extra foam with low-fat milk, cocoa powder but no cinnamon. Ah, all these choices, so that you can be you.

Elemental implements

The problem is that automatic coffeemakers are highly complex, with lots of moving parts, and are therefore much more likely to break down; like women, the more sophisticated and complicated they are, the more difficult they are to maintain. And since I have enough enigmatic women in my life to occupy my time, I opt for simplicity when it comes to coffeemakers, and kitchen equipment in general. In my kitchen you will not find any of those complicated gadgets that can chop, grate, slice, open bottles and make theater reservations. Nor will you find any electric blenders, food processors or egg beaters. I have five knives, pots and pans of stainless-steel lined copper, a wire whisk, a peeler, a grater, a sieve. (I also have some other things, but because I'm trying to make a point, I won't mention them.) With these few elemental implements, you can cook almost anything worth cooking. As Marx would have pointed out, the invention of the immersion blender was what led to the proliferation of soups with foam on top.

In general, though, technology has not been kind to me. Despite having had a phase when I could draw schematic diagrams, read resistors by their color bands and solder transistors without incinerating them, I'm always the person who gets tapes stuck in their VCR (almost always when it's something embarrassing) or have my cell phone suddenly switch to Bahasa. Computers, in particular, are actively malevolent: my PowerBook G3 would mysteriously black out once in a while; so I switched to an IBM ThinkPad, whose "motherboard" (a truly Freudian term, especially for a computer whose pointing device resembles a clitoris) simply stopped working one day; now I'm using the new iBook, which registers a "bus error" (which I suppose is like taking the Ilalim and having to double back at Guadalupe) every other time I turn it on.

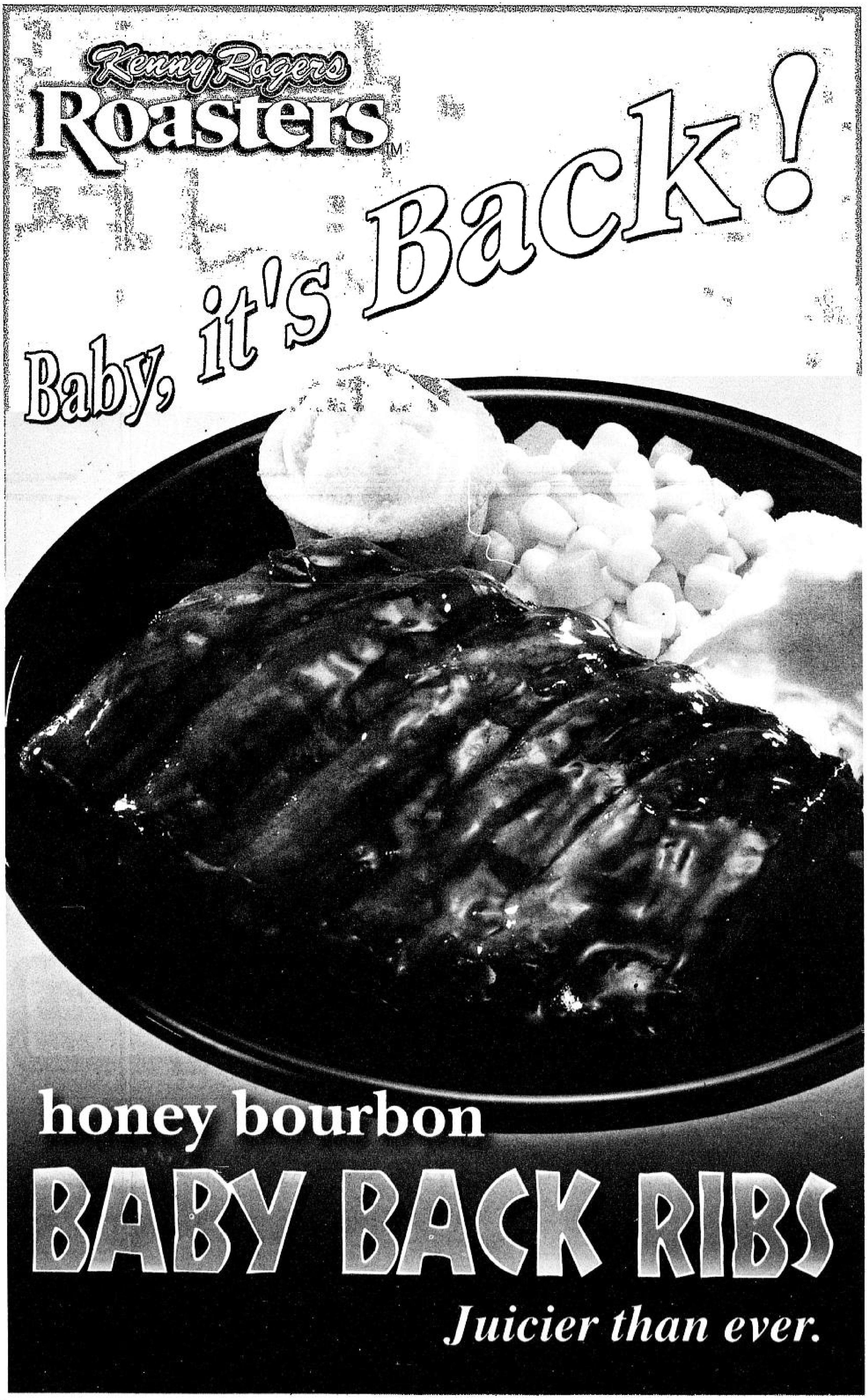
Assurance

Unlike other people who must have the newest and best mobile telephones, computers or clothes, I just need one that will work and will last as long as possible. Christofle sterling, John Lobb shoes, Porthault linens, and so on sound extravagant; but I have stopped even thinking about silverware or shoes for years. My friends' purchasing power can often be monitored by their watches, as they upgrade from Timex to Tag Heuer to Omega to Rolex to Cartier to Patek Philippe, Vacheron Constantin and Audemars Piguet. I myself have found that the best way to tell time is to look up at the wall or ask someone. I own several clocks, most of which don't work; the one by which I tell time, and whose ticking pervades my apartment, was bought at a junk shop and whose pendulum has to be adjusted constantly, and the hour corrected every few days. It's a good reminder that time is not regulated by watches and clocks, and it marches on relentlessly whether the pendulum swings faster or slower or not at all.

And as time passes, things decay; even sterling silver, Mauviel copper pans, Sabatier knives and Briggs umbrellas; more so digital cameras, computers and Ikea furniture. The damned gasket for the espresso maker will disappear. So far, there is no knowledge of how long a well-kept Sauternes or vintage port will last; parchment, marble, bronze, porcelain and plastic are among the materials that have survived over time. There are a lot of references about permanence we can look to (Heraclitus, Ozymandias, entropy, etc.); but in the end, what my father and I are looking for is the same assurance: that when we need it, it will be there, and if it is a machine of some sort, that it will be in working order.

I shall end with a rather elliptical anecdote. A friend of mine has a Motorola mobile telephone. anyone who has used that brand can tell you how ridiculous and impractical its user interface is. He wants to buy a new one, so (like a death wish as opposed to suicide) he leaves it unguarded in public places, throws it about carelessly, puts it on a deck chair by the beach, etc. But it's the Highlander of cell phones; it refuses to die. I have a feeling that billions and billions of years from now, when the universe has expanded and collapsed again, it will still be alive, along with Dick Clark and "Eat Bulaga."

E-mail the author at Clinton@i-manila.com.ph



Le femme in Le Soufflé's kitchen

(From page C1)

However, the aunt who raised her happened to be in the trading business and it was only natural that the banking world would rub off some on Jessie. "You know, the works—suit, the corporate life, I thought that was what I wanted," she adds. After graduating with a degree in banking and finance, Jessie found herself working for the family business. "Soon I was looking for something more, to put some excitement into my life," she laughs. One day, her aunt suggested that she join a baking contest, just for fun. "Actually, she's the one who cooks real well and up to now attends all those cooking demonstrations," Jessie says fondly. That was the1983 Great Maya Cookfest and Jessie bagged first place in the baking division.

The rest, as they say, is gourmet history.

Jessie Sincioco is warm, perky and fun. She is sprightly and likes to be on her toes all the time. "That's why the kitchen is perfect for me though I never thought I would love it as much as I do now," she relates.

Breaking barriers

It wasn't a piece of cake in the beginning. Seven years with the pastry department at the InterContinental Hotel honed her baking skills, which as she puts it, "brings out the artist in you."

In the 1980s, there were no women in the kitchen and the chief chef's cardinal rule was no girls in his kitchen. "So it was really difficult for me," recalls Jessie.

The difficulties, however, only served to make her more determined and to persevere. At the end of a seven-year stint with the hotel, Jessie was executive chef of the pastry division. In 1990, Le Soufflé in Greenbelt was born. Nine years later, the highly successful restaurant moved to the Fort, and on Valentine's Day 2000, Le Soufflé Bistro in the Ortigas area opened its doors.

"Boy, that was an experience! Opening day, the oven was not installed yet and we had 130 guests," she recalls with amusement. Unruffled, Jessie went about her business and to her and the staff's credit, Valentine opening day went without a hitch. The lady clearly thrives on pressure.

Her favorite story is of how she was able to plan and execute two dinners for the Aga-Charlene Muhlach wedding last May in Baguio. "Imagine, 500 guests, 40 waiters, 25 kitchen staff, not counting stewards and maintenance personnel. I had two clear books filled with documentation for the event—the biggest file I've ever had. Thank God, everything went smoothly, not a single complaint," she recounts. "Of course it was so well planned and I was so impressed with Aga's decision-making skills and the way he attended to all the details of the wedding painstakingly. *Pinahanga niya talaga ako.* I recall the first meeting we had in Baguio with Rita Neri (wedding planner) and Robert Blancaflor (florist) he took us aside and told us, 'Guys, I want you to make sure that Charlene feels really special on our wedding day. Forget about me, focus on her.' He's really something else." Jessie likens the Aga-Charlene wedding to opening a full-seated restaurant for two days.

Full day

Jessie's day is a full one from the time she gets up at 7 a.m. until her day ends officially at midnight. "I get to Soufflé at around 9 a.m. and by the time I've checked everything in the kitchen, it's lunchtime already," she begins. One can be assured of the highest quality control from Le Soufflé's kitchen as every dish that leaves its confines is personally checked by Jessie.

"After lunch, I'm at the office attending to administrative affairs, then by the time that's done, it's dinner *naman* and I'm back in the kitchen," she adds. It's difficult to believe that Jessie was once very shy and confined to the backroom. "I learned to love cooking and overcame my shyness when we opened Le Soufflé in Makati," she relates. "*S'yempre*, if you're part-owner, you cannot just stay in the *kusina*."

Sundays are reserved for family and much-needed rest. "I go visit my aunt in Marikina or my mother who lives in Bulacan," she says. Family is important to Jessie and this afternoon she is all excited over preparations for a niece's kiddie birthday party.

It is quite obvious that Jessie gets a natural high from preparing and serving food. At Le Soufflé, she makes it a point to spend some time on the floor and, when asked by guests to make suggestions, always manages to come up with something special.

"You know, I've always believed that whatever you feel will go into the food that you cook. Remember that movie 'Like Water for Chocolate'? I think there's some truth to that," she says. It's no wonder then that after a meal at Le Soufflé, one leaves with wobbly knees and a heady feeling. The food has been prepared from a kitchen that radiates with the joy of its mistress.

E-mail the author at cbguballa@inquirer.com.ph

JESSIE SINCIOCO. At home in her domain

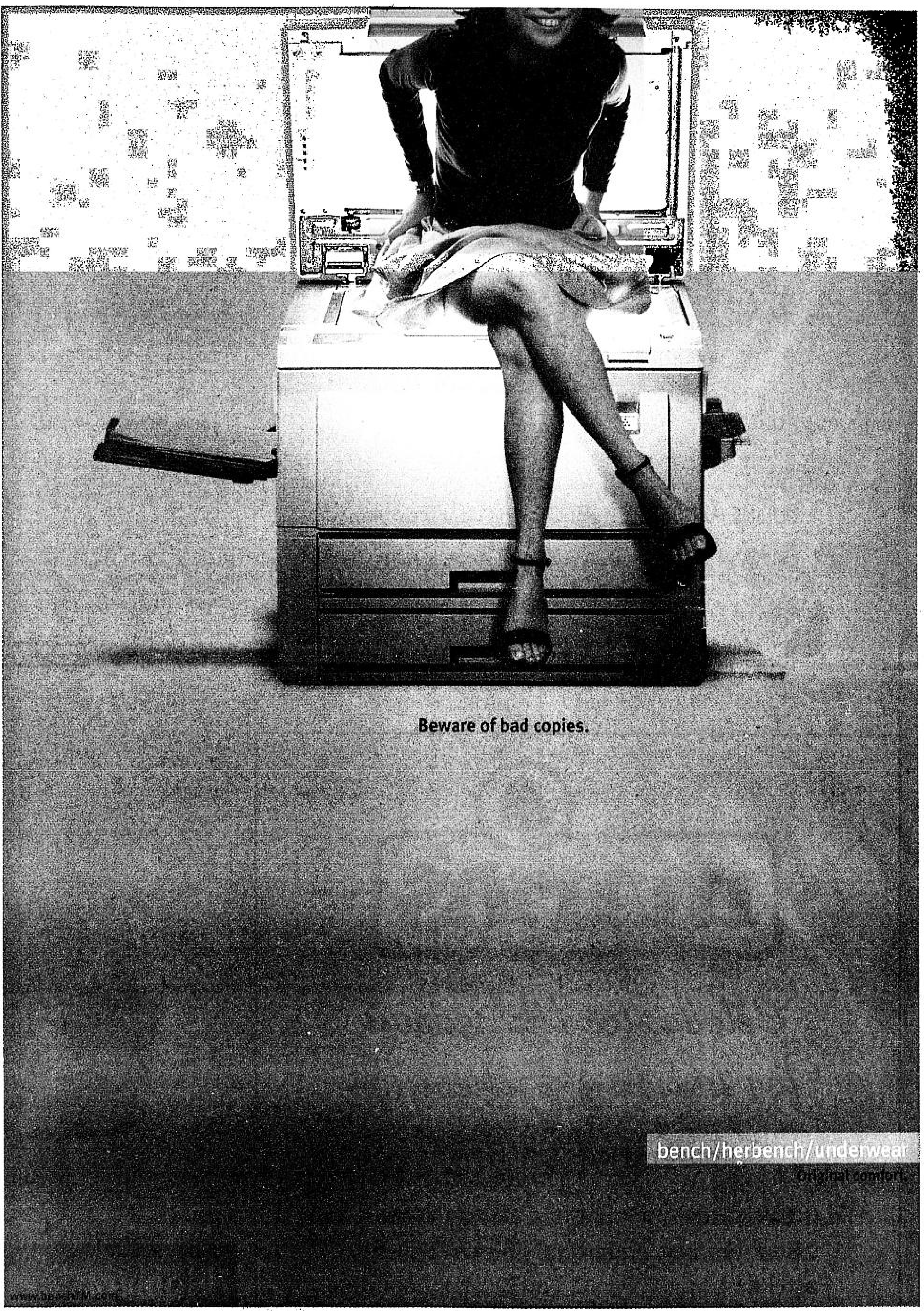
Hone up for the holidays

THE MAYA Kitchen Culinary Arts Center's Pasta Cooking on Dec. 1, at 9 a.m.-1 p.m. teaches the best way to cook lasagna, chicken cannelloni, assorted pasta dishes and sauces like garlic, fettucini, carbonara, putanesca, pesto and negra plus a bonus on how to make homemade pasta.

Baking with Institutional Mixes will also be on Dec. 1, 1:30-5 p.m. with assorted brownies The course also includes cost profit analysis for better entrepreneurship.

Certificate courses with hands-on for Cooking II (Comprehensive Cooking) for Career Cooks is scheduled on Dec. 4 and 7, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. with free lunch. Coverage includes menu planning, international standard techniques of preparing stocks, soups, sauces, dressings, salads, main dishes, homemade cold cuts and others applicable to 1001 recipes including plate and platter presentation.

On Dec. 5 and 7, at 1:30-5 p.m., the course is Basic Baking. This course covers hands-on techniques in preparing basic piecrust, different types of cakes, quick bread, yeast breads and others.



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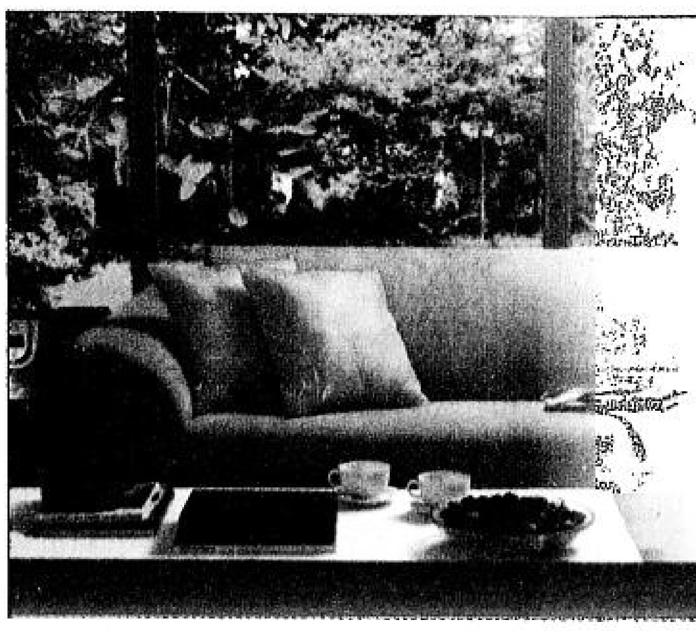
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It's a small world after all when dining at the RCBC's podium 3

SASHIMI/ SUSHI

Eat's not just another food court

By Rowena C. Burgos
Photos by Roger Carpio

UNLIKE other food courts that gather several concessionaires in one place, Eat Inc. at Podium 3 of the RCBC Plaza, corner of Ayala and Sen. Gil Puyat Avenues, Makati, maintains the quality of its food and services by being its single food and services provider.

It's also the only food court that implements a one-time cash pay-out system. Upon entry, each diner is issued a pass where all purchases made at any food stall are recorded. Upon exit, the card is surrendered to the cashier, where payment of total consumption is settled.

These days, many Filipinos shun the bistro around the corner and the high-priced temples of haute cuisine. Because many of them have traveled, they have developed a taste for different cuisines.

Around every corner of the 800-seat food court lie new experiences to savor.

Designed by Sonia Santiago Olivares and Associates, 10 food stalls circle the perimeter of Eat Inc., each offering a different type of cuisine. Beverage stations are strategically located around the area for easy access.

The place features an array of hearty and eclectic courses at affordable prices. Choices range from native dishes to Chinese, Japanese, Italian, Spanish, Mexican and American; and from light snacks to complete meals, desserts and cocktails.

"More and more Filipinos are becoming adventurous, well-versed and advanced when it comes to food. So to satisfy their cravings, we thought of featuring a wide variety of meals. We serve what customers want. We do not want to guess what they'd like to eat," says Chef See Cheong Yan, who supervises the food court's daily operations.

Dining buzz

From 7 a.m.-10 p.m., Monday to Sunday, Eat Inc. is a one-story hive of urban buzz. The restaurant scene blasts off as the RCBC offices empty out during lunch and dinner. Happy hours are from 5-8 p.m. with live band performances every Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

Its svelte, modern décor is intelligent rather than maniacally lavish and the food follows suit.

"Mealtime should give one a feeling of abundance. For me, eating is always a joy," says See.

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Ultimate Food Exp
ROAST CHICKEN

CHEF See Cheong Ya

At Eat Inc., See shows that the wedding of Chinese techniques and international flavors need not be a shotgun affair. His plates showcase a simplicity of presentation and a complexity of flavors and ingredients that belie his age.

The way he runs the kitchen of Eat Inc.—his level of discipline, cleanliness, technique and intensity—is a projection of early lessons.

Chef See has been in the food business since he was 18. Educated in the best schools in Switzerland, he soaked up the cosmopolitan flavors from the classically trained chefs he worked with.

"Being a chef is a demanding career, it takes a lot of time and patience," says Chef See. Tired of preparing gourmet fare, he just cooks simple food when at home with his wife and children. "It depends on my moods. Sometimes, I spend two hours in a wet market, fantasizing what I will cook. This is my way of relaxation," says See.

(More photos on page C5)

E-mail the author at rburgos@inquirer.com.ph

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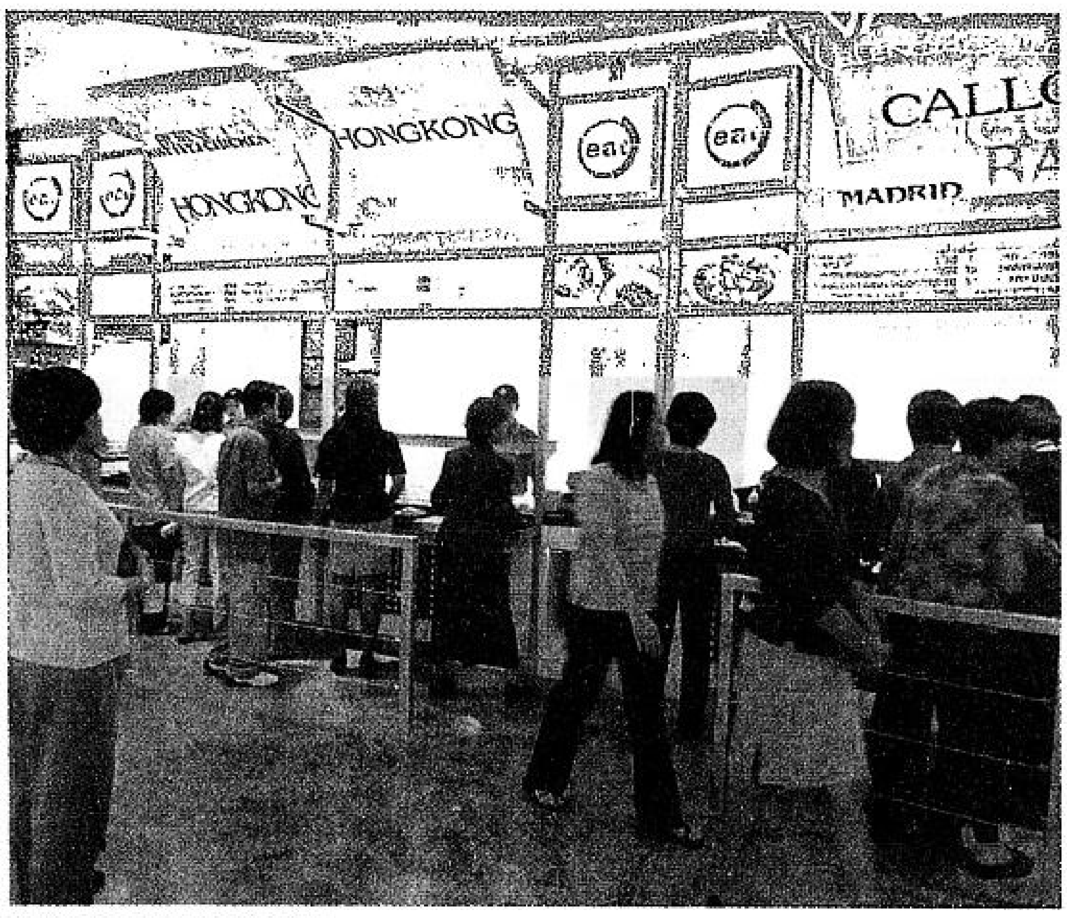

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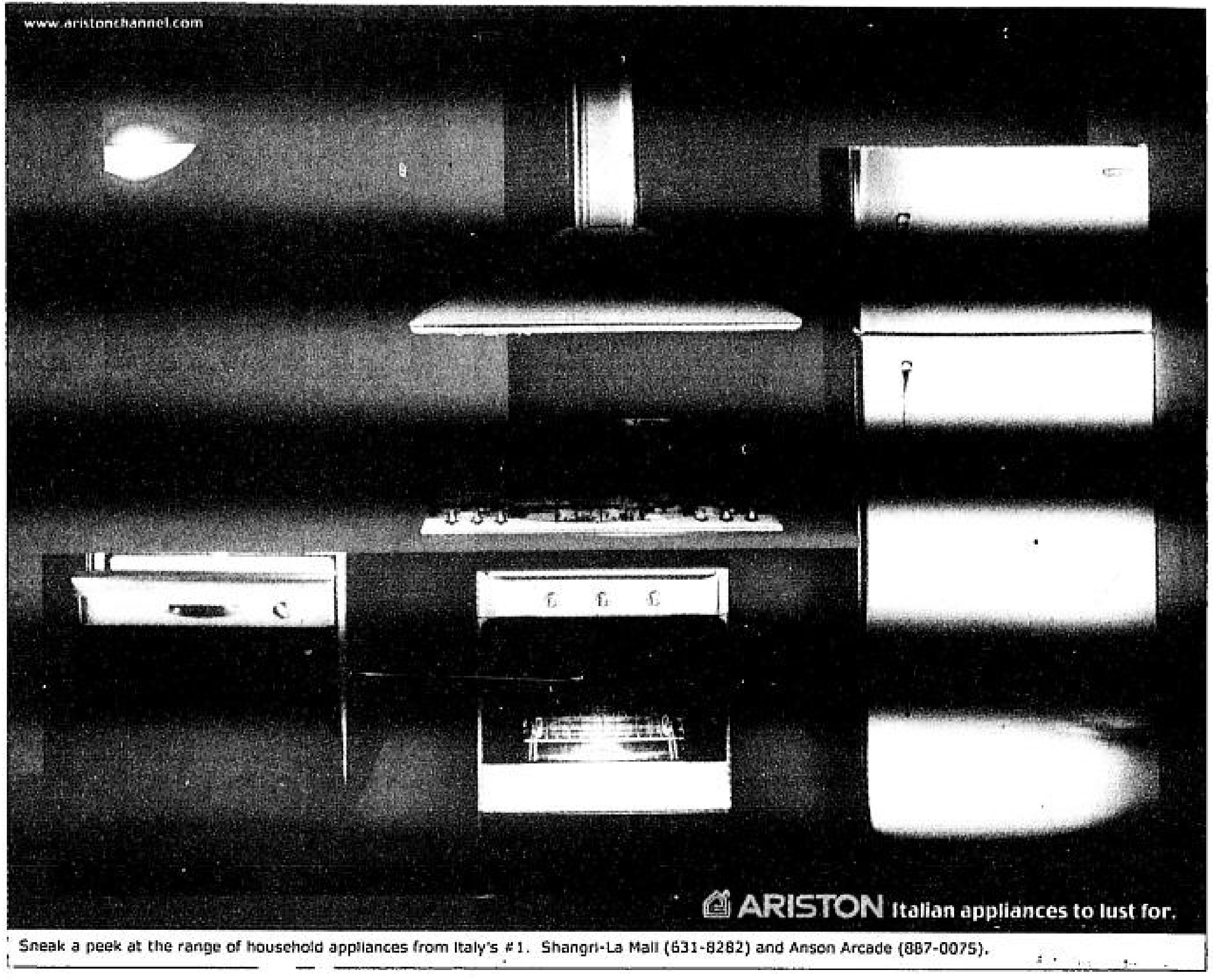
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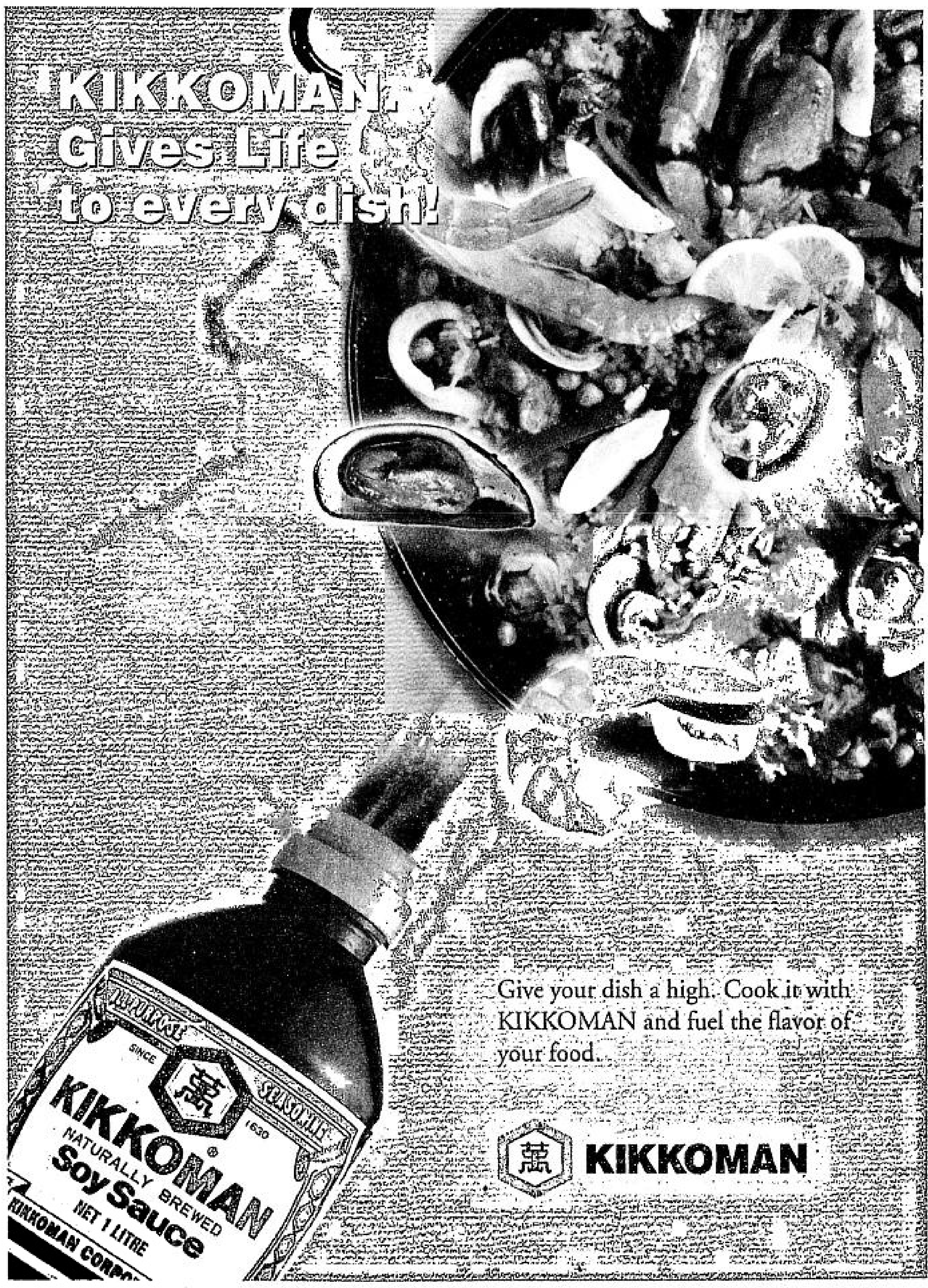
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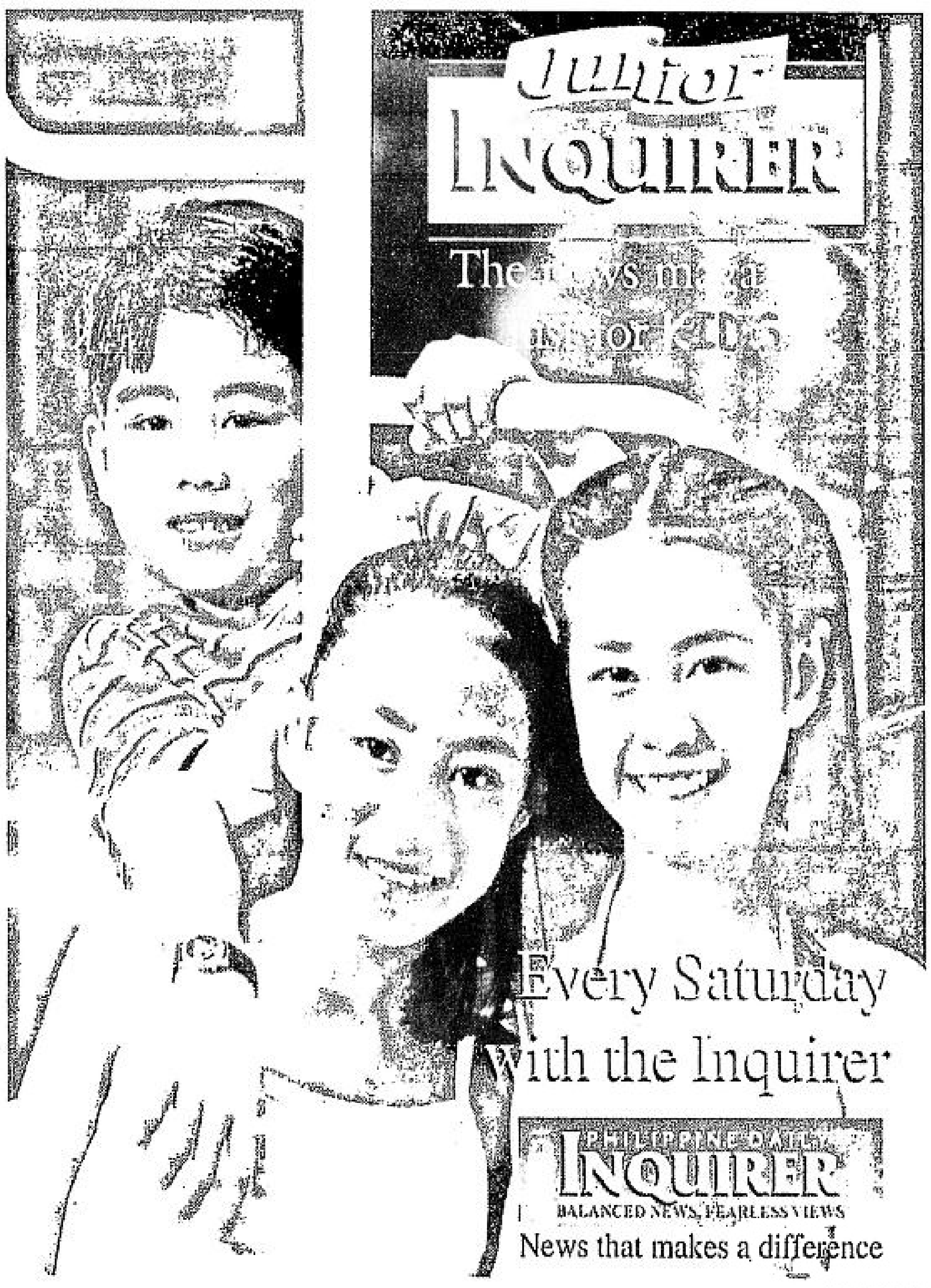
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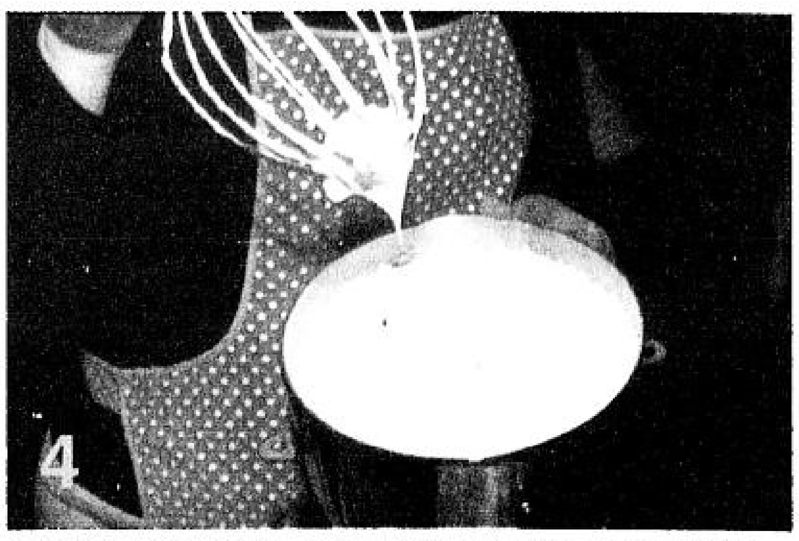
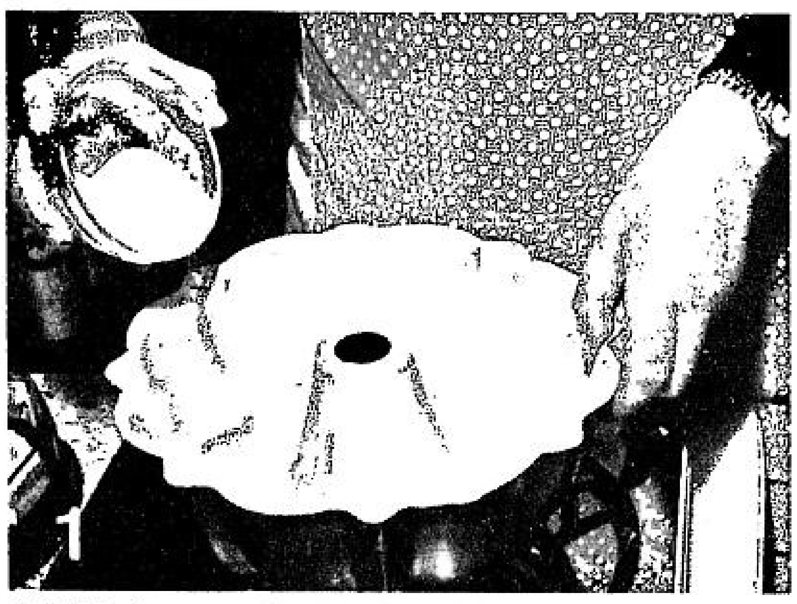
WHEN the egg whites form soft peaks, gradually add the 2 c sugar.



ADD the vanilla extract. Beat at high speed for several minutes until egg whites form stiff, shiny peaks.

POUR the mixture into the Bundt pan with caramelized sugar and spread it equally.

BEAT the egg whites on moderately slow speed until they are foamy. Then, beat in the cream of tartar.



SPREAD 1½ c sugar in a Bundt pan. Caramelize by placing pan on top of burner on medium heat. Set aside. Meanwhile, preheat oven to 350ºF.

Ethereal holiday dessert

By Vangie Baga-Reyes
Photos by Roger Carpio

STEP BY STEP

A WORD of advice: if you want to elicit wows from your friends and family for a perfect holiday dessert, try this festive sweet ending called *canonigo*. This recipe is ultra sweet yet light. *Canonigo* is a nice addition to your repertoire of desserts, especially during the Yuletide season.

Canonigo is not time-consuming to make, but it's a little sensitive to temperature and handling. For instance, if your egg-beating bowls or beater blades are greasy, unclean and wet, they will prevent the egg whites from mounting. Also, any specks of egg yolk in the whites can prevent the whites from rising.

According to noted Inquirer food columnist and food historian Doreen Fernandez, there is no clear record as to when *canonigo* came about in the Philippines. However, a popular French dessert, Ile Flottante or Floating Island, was said to be the original name for *canonigo* since they have exactly the same ingredients and procedure. Floating Island was described as a giant meringue soufflé floating on a custard sea. *Canonigo*, for a more exciting version, has caramel syrup on top.

It is then assumed that somewhere over the years, the name Floating Island was deliberately changed to *canonigo* and the dessert later became a favorite in most Spanish restaurants. Fernandez stresses the original *canonigo* was made by the late food expert Doña Montserrat Viaplana.

Renaming the Floating Island to *canonigo* has given it some kind of sophistication and attraction. As they say, it's all in the name.

Canonigo is preferably served cold. Tina Lopez has been preparing this divine indulgence for El Comedor (tel. 892-5071, 893-2518) for more than a year now. Her version is ultra sweet and rich and must be served in small portions. You may unmold the meringue onto a round platter, pour your custard sauce around, and serve as is. Remember, when baked, the meringue will sink down to somewhat less than its original volume.

Before serving *canonigo*, you may want to dress it up with mango balls, cherries and peaches. Estimate cost of this recipe, which serves 8-10, is P150-P200.

Ingredients:
2 c egg white
2 tsp cream of tartar
2 c white sugar
2 tsp vanilla extract

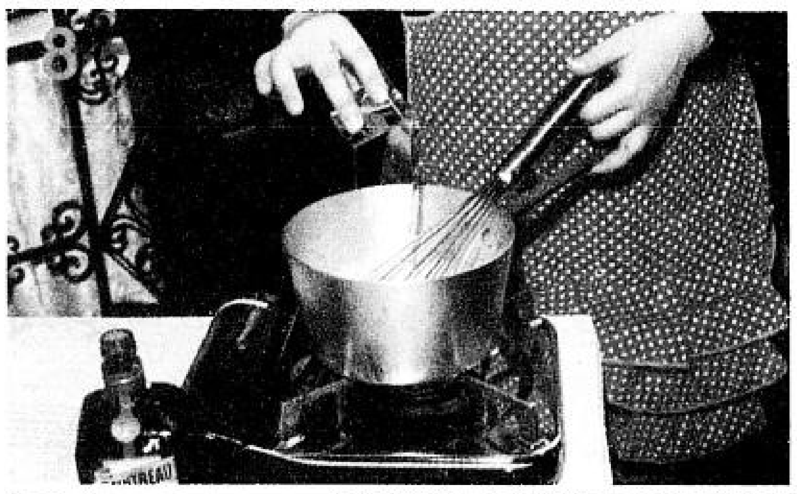
For caramel topping:
1½ c sugar

For custard sauce:
1 can evaporated milk
6 egg yolks
¼ c sugar
3 tbsp Cointreau

For suggestions, e-mail the author at vbaga@inquirer.com.ph

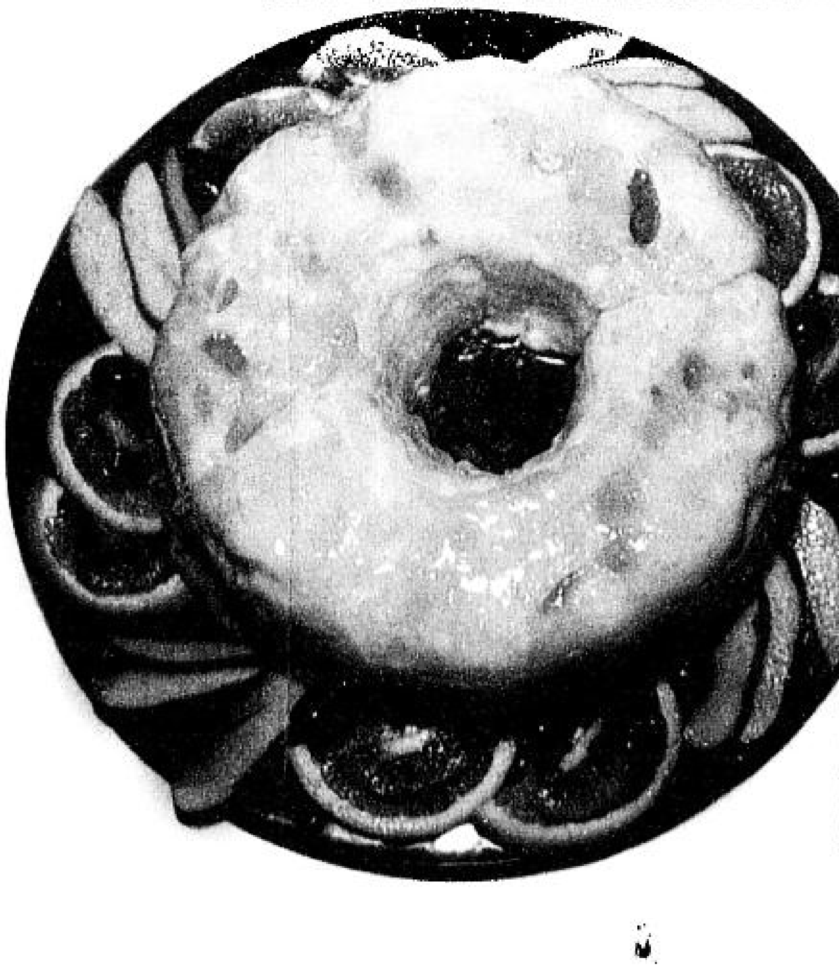
PLACE the Bundt pan in a large, shallow baking pan with 3-4 c of water.

BAKE at 350ºF for about 40 minutes.

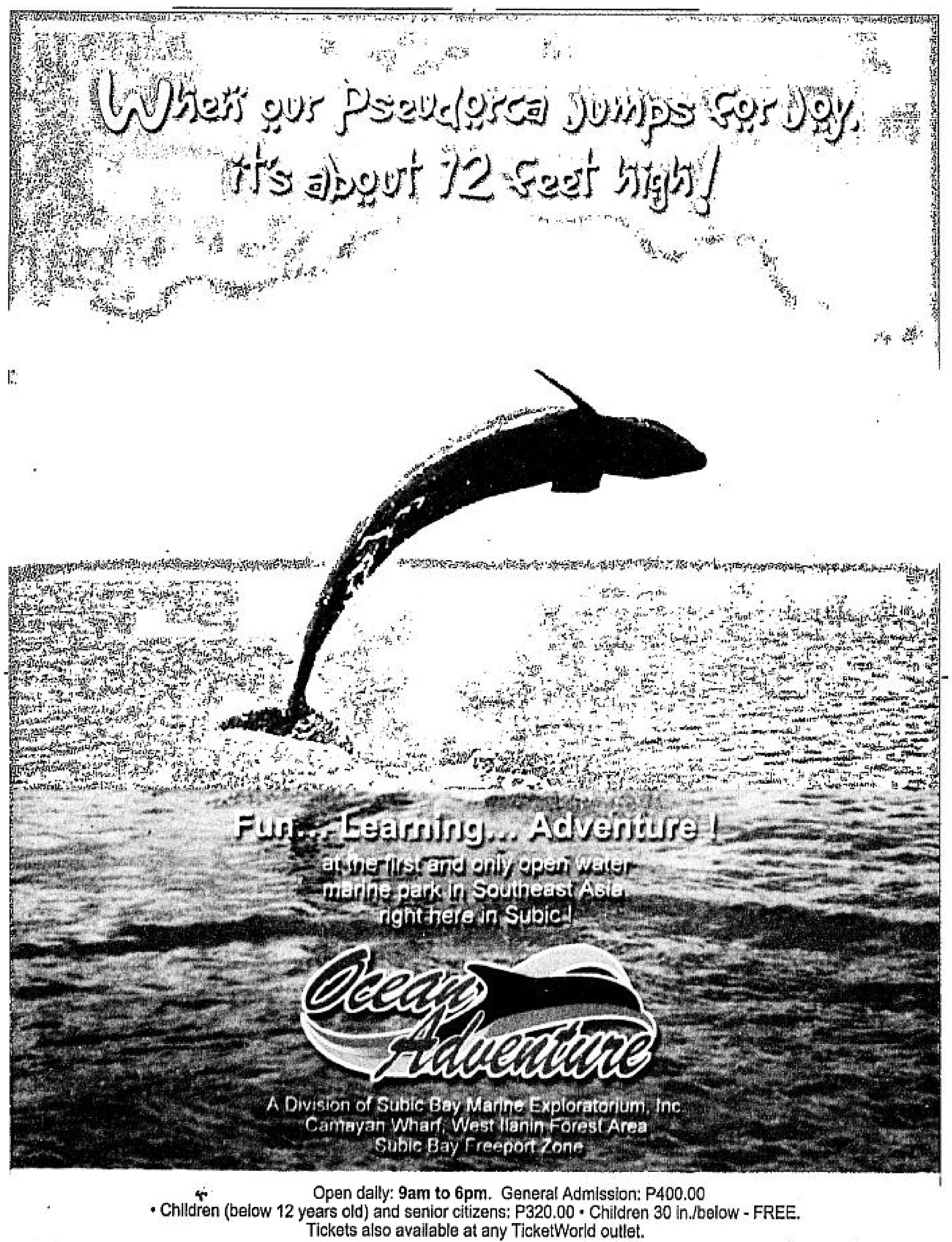


FOR THE SAUCE, put milk, egg yolk and sugar in another saucepan and cook until the mixture thickens, about five minutes.

ADD the Cointreau and stir.



TO SERVE, unmold the cake onto a round platter; add custard sauce on the side.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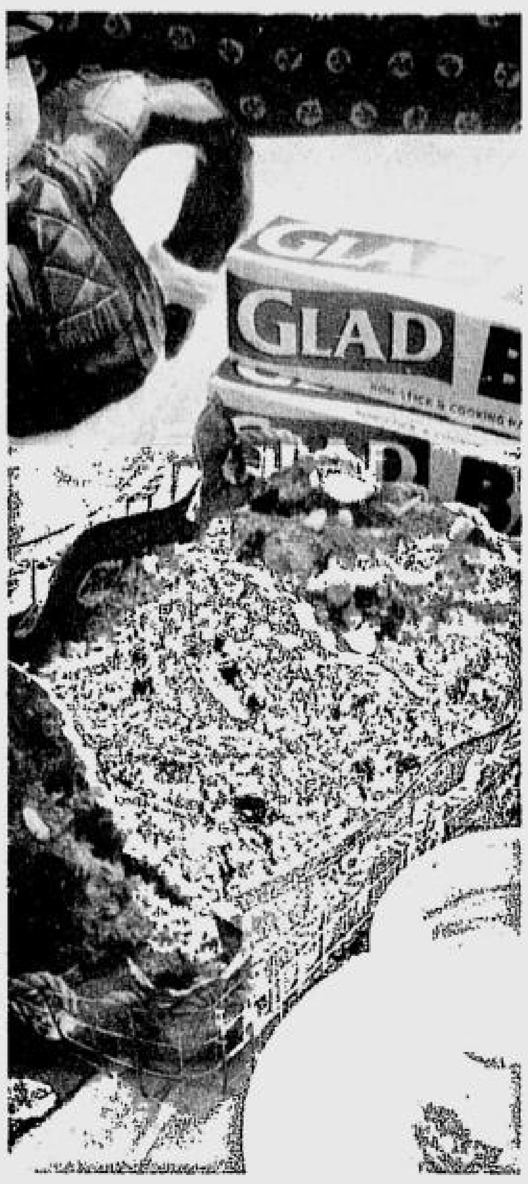

Baking with coconut, pineapple and macadamia nuts

THIS bread recipe from culinary expert Dorothy Ferreira, who teams up with Glad Bags and Wrap when making and baking wonders in the kitchen, gets its island flavors from coconut, pineapple and macadamia nuts. Dorothy teaches creative cooking classes to hobbyists, weekend chefs, simple homemakers, aspiring cooks and culinary aficionados at Dorothy's Cooking School at 48 Third St., New Manila, QC (tel. 721-7735).

Hawaiian Bread

½ c sifted all-purpose flour
1 tsp sifted baking soda
1 tsp sifted baking powder
1 tsp fine salt
1 tsp ground cinnamon
½ tsp ground nutmeg or ¼ tsp ground mace
1 c unsweetened shredded/desiccated coconut
2/3 c corn oil
1 c dark brown sugar (lightly spooned)
2 whole eggs, graded extra large
1 c mashed ripe bananas
½ c canned crushed pineapple
½ c coarsely chopped pitted prunes

Topping:
¼ c almond flakes or coarsely chopped macadamia nuts

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line the bottom of 2 (7x4x3 inches) medium loaf pans with Glad Bake Paper. Grease the sides of the pan with lard. Dust the greased areas with flour and tap off excess. Set aside.

In a medium-sized mixing bowl combine the first 7 ingredients. Mix well with a spoon and set aside. In a large mixing bowl pour in the corn oil, the sugar and the eggs. Mix until blended. Pour in the mashed bananas, the crushed pineapple and the prunes. Beat until blended. Lastly, pour in the remaining dry ingredients. Beat only until blended.

Divide the batter equally among the prepared baking pans. Top with almonds or macadamia nuts. Bake for 1 hour to 1 hour and 10 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.

Yield: 1 pan yields 8 servings

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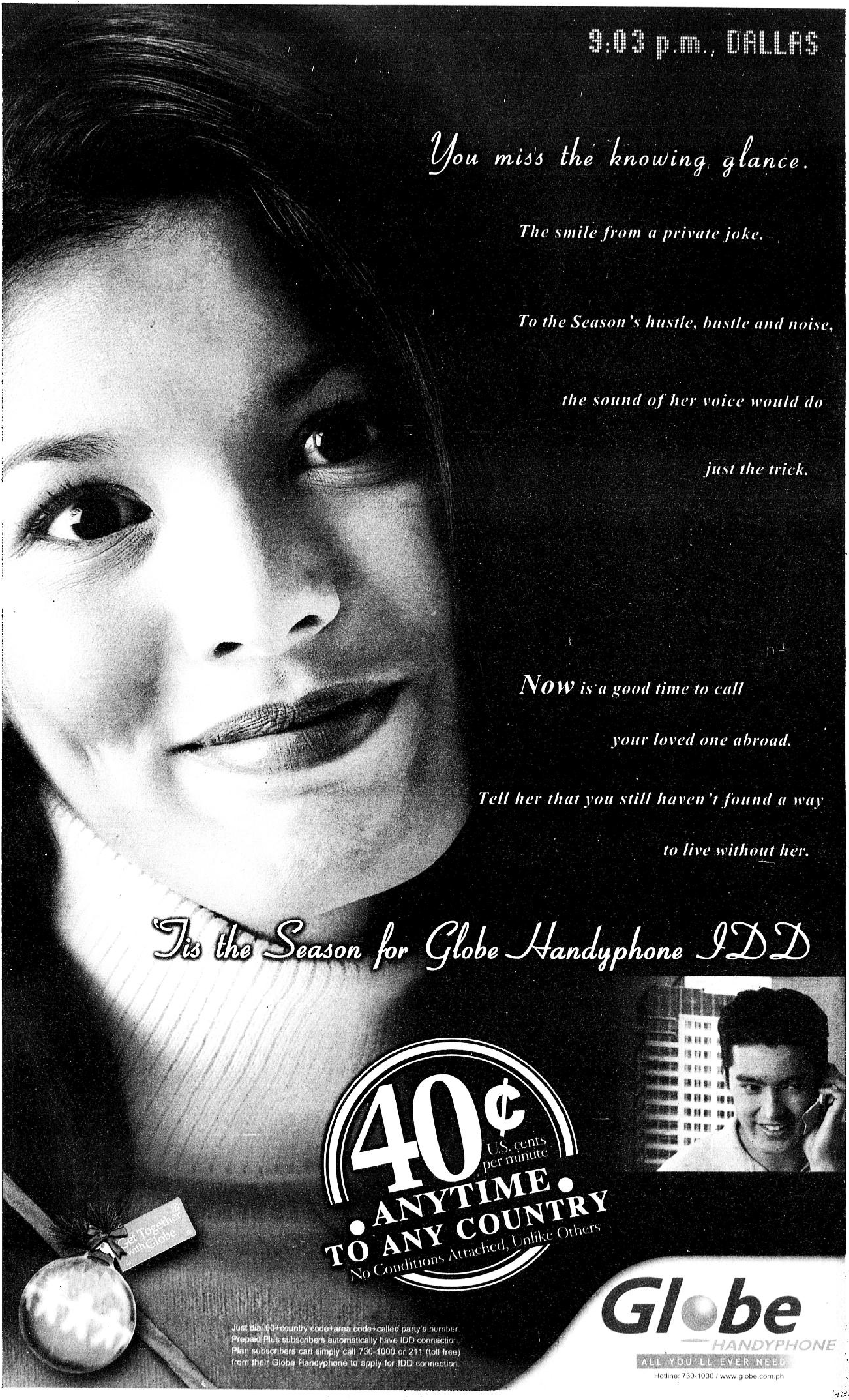

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Where food nourishes life

IN GOOD TASTE

Doreen G. Fernandez

OKINAWA has more hundred-year-olds than any other place in Japan, which has more centenarians than any other place in the world. Okinawa thus is the world center of longevity, in which men and women live to 110 or 112 in good health, still working at their homes, trades and gardens on their beautiful island of green forests and blue waters. The word "retirement" does not exist in the traditional Okinawan dialect.

How did that happen? Is it just an accident of nature? The Japan Foundation, believing that this has messages for the world and especially for Southeast Asia, recently convened a conference called "Traditional Dietary Culture and Longevity" in Nago City.

There had been, earlier, an Okinawa International Conference on Longevity (the theme: "Successful Aging Okinawa Style"; "Modern Science Meets Ancient Wisdom"); and even before that the landmark book "The Okinawa Program" (Clarkson Potter, 2001) by Doctors Bradley and Craig Wilcox and Makoto Suzuki. The book documents the 25-year study of Okinawa ("How the World's Longest-lived People Achieve Everlasting Health—and How You Can, Too"), and became a bestseller in the American book market.

We Southeast Asians (a Korean, two Japanese, a Vietnamese, a Chinese and a Filipina) tasted, compared the long-life food with our own, and derived insights. Here is what I learned.

Eat natural foods, especially vegetables and grains. Being chopsticks users, the Okinawans serve various small dishes that add up to a variety of vegetables and flavors: sponge gourd (*patola*) simmered in tofu and *miso*; stir-fried *konbu* (kelp) or *okara* (seafood residue) or scallions or *kangkong*; Swiss chard in sauce; boiled Chinese cabbage. None of them would be unfamiliar to the Filipino, being ingredients we know, but here stir-fried, boiled or pickled, and served in small portions.

The soybean is healthy and versatile: *Yushi dofu* is made from mineral-rich seawater and soy beans; tofu and *awamori* (rice liquor) becomes special *tofuyo*; soft tofu with tiny fermented fishes is a delight in contrasts, tofu can also be sugared for dessert.

And don't forget the tubers: sweet potatoes, taro, a purple variety like *ube*, which are mashed or boiled, as savories or sweets. Or seaweed varieties, not only *konbu*, but *lato* (sea grapes) and brown *gulaman*.

Pork is healthy. The favorite Okinawan meats, jokes nutritionist and author Hiroko She, is first, pork, second, pork, and third maybe chicken. (Beef they do not eat.) Pork ribs with soft bones are a favorite, stewed with carrots, radishes and *konbu*, and especially used as the centerpiece for one of the best comfort bowls in the world, the local soba (thick and lovely to bite into) with a rich broth/*konbu*, carrots and radishes. It was one of the best things I have ever tasted, and our Korean and Japanese colleagues traveled back to it with eagerness and longing, after many

WHERE\ p.D2

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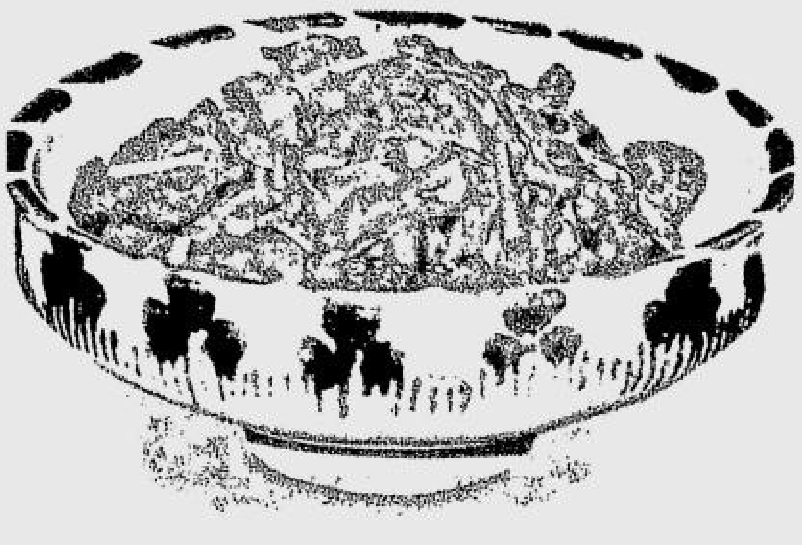
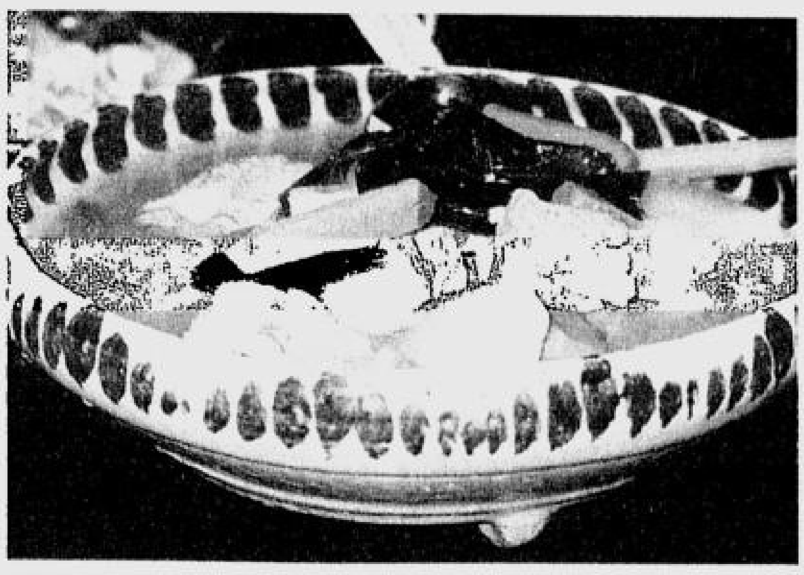
The word 'retirement' does not exist in the traditional dialect of Okinawans, thanks to their nutritious diet



CHICKEN gizzards stir-fried with scallions



SOKI-JIRU pork stew with vegetables and *konbu*—rich in nutrition and warms the body

REFUTE. Glazed pork cooked slowly to remove fat with *konbu* and vegetables

Where food nourishes life

(From page D1)

years.

Pork feet are also favored (although unusual cuts like feet and head are not eaten in Japan): grilled, scraped in hot water, simmered for three hours to remove the fat, then seasoned with salt and soy sauce, *konbu*, radish and *bonito* stock, and perchance green papaya. The head transforms into dishes of pigs' ears (close to our *tokwa't baboy*); the belly (tender, minimally fat *liempo*) into a celebratory dish called *inamudochi*, and into the low-calorie *refute*.

Don't neglect the broth. Good meats, fish and vegetables can be tasty just boiled in water, but would be even better in broths enriched by dried *bonito*, *konbu*, bone stock and other flavor-makers.

Vary the sizes of dishes. *Champuro*, the favorite stir-fry, is usually *goya* (*ampalaya*) stir-fried with tofu and *bonito* flakes and served in a large communal bowl. There can be *patola champuro*, too, and one which had, memorably, Spam. The large American military base in Okinawa brought that in, as American militarization, and Clark Field et al brought it to the Philippines.

Fish can go into *miso* soup, or become sashimi, or be butterflied and fried whole and crisp. Okinawans like the crunchy head, and often leave it for the last bite.

Spice lightly. Most dishes are not too salty, nor too sour, nor too hot. Soba is sparked with a little liquid from bottles in which red chills had been marinated in *awamori*.

Serve dishes with simple grace and imagination. Use different small dishes covered or open, as well as handcrafted larger bowls. At Shinzan Soba, all the bowls were white and simple. At Wankara Wankara, a gallery restaurant, serving ware was taken from the pottery exhibit, then returned after use. At Iroha-tei, we sat on the floor and ate from individual lacquer trays. At the Busena Terraces Hotel, the chef prepared an Okinawa-French dinner on locally made glass dishes.

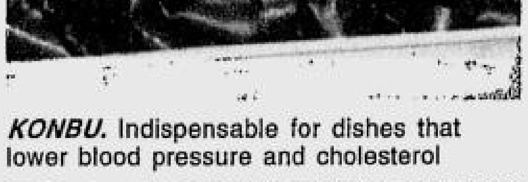
Think health. Basic to the healthiness of food is the philosophy, or "the importance of preparing foods with sincere love." It is vital to focus on food as being both for nutrition and for health. "Food should nourish life. This is the best medicine," says an Okinawan proverb.

Set out to be healthy; reduce stress; ease up on your lifestyle. "What counts most is the heart," goes another Okinawan proverb, bolstered by "Don't worry, it'll work out," a popular saying.

Bond with people in tour network and nearby ("One cannot live in this world without the support of others"). Adjust your current diet to a healthier one. (The Okinawa Program provides a four-week turn-around program.)

Remember: "Life is a sacred treasure" in any language, in any culture, in any time. So aim to live to be a hundred, and enjoy life along the way.

Restaurants: Shinzan Soba, 1-9-2 Aza-Ohigashi, Nago City, tel. 0980-53-3354; Wankara Wankara Gallery Restaurant, e-mail wankara@niraine.jp; Emi-no-mise (Emi's), Okinawan village food, tel./fax 0980-44-3220; Iroha-tei, traditional family food, tel. 885-3666, fax 835-5112, e-mail irohatei@mocha.ocn.ne.jp



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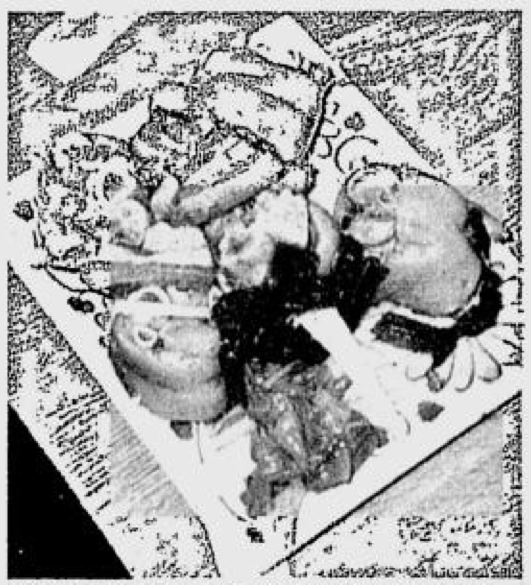

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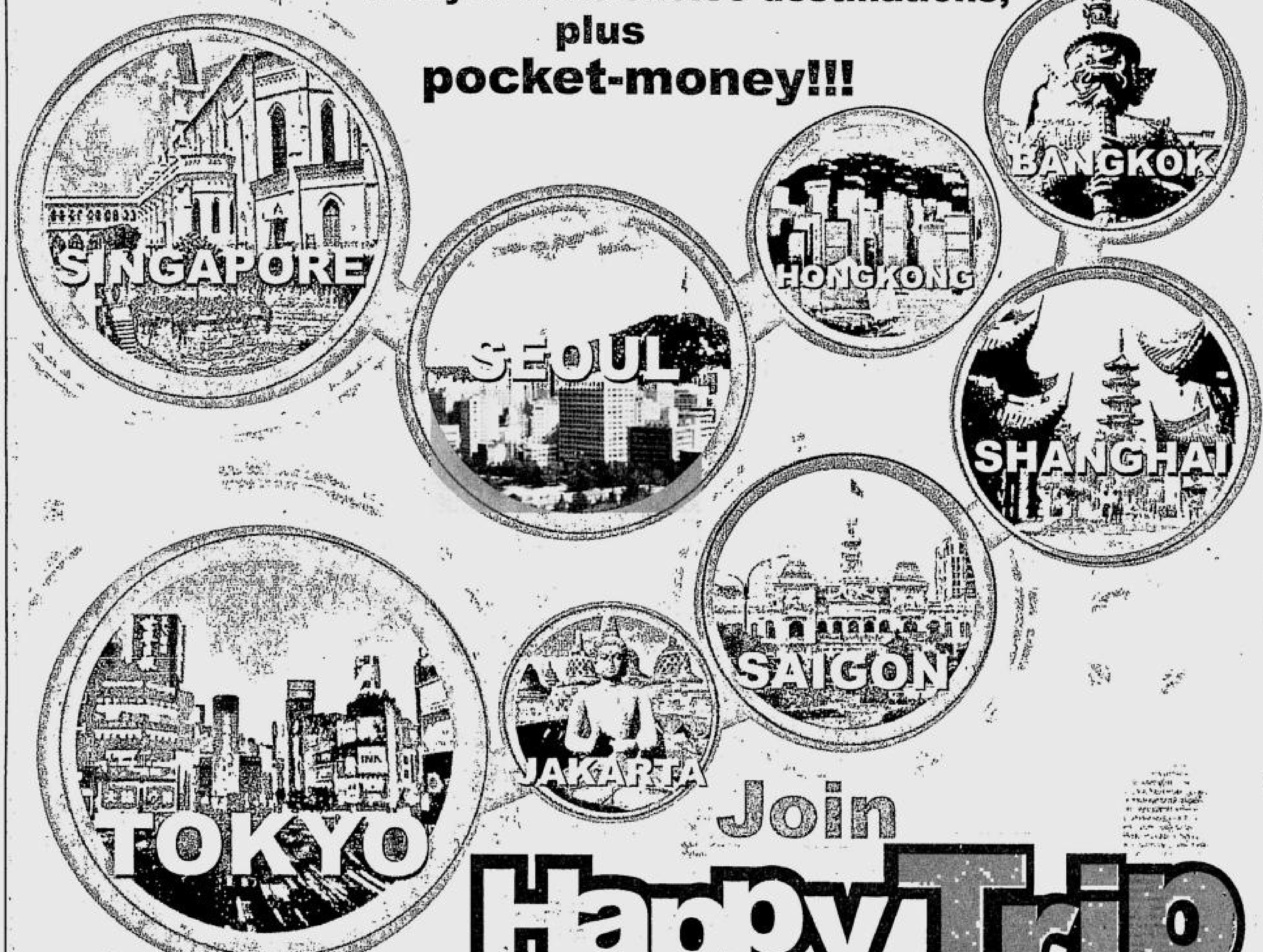

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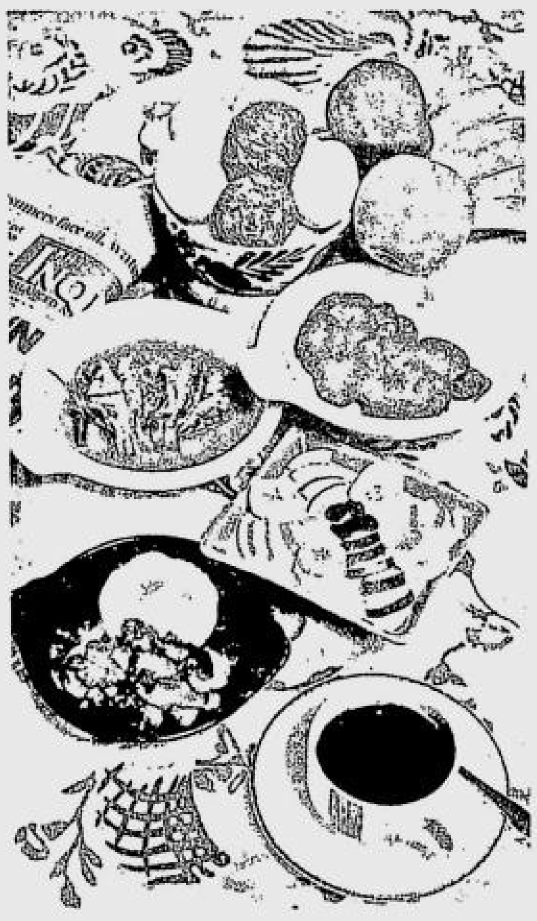
Other treats include maki, nigiri or guru sushi with varieties such as salmon, tuna and California maki; as well as prawn tempura, chicken teriyaki, raw seafood roll and vegetable combinations.



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7) December 17 - 18 (2 days) / 8:30 am - 5:00 pm HAM-MAKING, GALANTINA, PAELLA, ROASTBEEF, 24-HOUR FRUIT SALAD, CHICKEN PASTEL - 4,500. Free Ingredients.
8) December 19 / 8:30 am - 5:00 pm - COLD PORCELAIN PIPING - P3,500. Free hand piping, any size in laces, links and drawings like the royal icing and flood works.
9) December 19 / 8:30 am - 5:00 pm - SPECIAL CAKES - P2,500. Black Forest Cherry Cake, Crema de Fruta, Fruit Cake, Fruit Torte, Moist Chocolate Cake, Pistachio Cake, Queen's Torte.
10) December 20 - NEW CAKES, PASTRIES AND COOKIES - P2,500. Cooked Carrot Cake, Banana Cake, Peanut Butter, Coconut Cookies, Choco-Chip Cookies, Chocolate Nut, Hopia, Siopao. Free ingredients.
11) December 21 - BREAD MAKING - P2,000. Dinner Rolls, Honey Bread, Raisin Bread, White Bread & Ensaymada.
12) December 22 - SPECIAL BAKING - P2,000. Pineapple Upside-down, Ube Cake, Pandan Cake, Ensaymada, Caramel Tart, Special Custard Cake.
13) December 23 - P4,500. a. Pato Tim; b. Pata Tim; c. 15 Minutes Steam Fish; d. Victoria's Bouquet, Chicken Wings

AVAIL OF THE FIRST PHILIPPINE CAKE DECORATING BOOKS. "THE PHILIPPINE FLOWERS IN SUGAR & CELEBRATION CAKES BOOK 1", "CAKE TOPS WITH PHILIPPINE FLAIR BOOK 2", "CAKE COLLECTION BOOK 3", "A GOLDEN CELEBRATION IN COLD PORCELAIN BOOK 4", "WILTON BOOK 2002"; WILTON PANS, BUY 1 TAKE 1.

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From now on,
there's no need to rush
to your fastfood outlet
in the morning just to
enjoy hash brown.

Introducing...

FRENCHIES
Hash Brown
The cook-it yourself hash brown

If you want hash brown for breakfast, you don't have to get up real early to beat the 10:00 o'clock cut-off time for the morning meal in fastfood restaurants.

Just buy *FRENCHIES* hash brown and have six appetizing, delicious hash brown patties in your own homes, enjoy it during breakfast, lunch, dinner or snack time.

Preparing it is so easy, just fry it and your favorite hash brown is now ready to be enjoyed.

So when you want hash brown get *FRENCHIES* Hash Brown, because you should have it when you want it!!

Drive home this beauty
by Christmas Day!

Power Plant's
Red Hot
on our first year

In just 3 weeks, you can win this Ford Explorer Sport Trac. Every P500 purchase entitles you to a raffle ticket. It's our treat to mark our anniversary and celebrate the Christmas Season! See posters for details.

Anticipated Simbang Gabi
Simbang Gabi masses for 9-days, held every night at 9 PM starting Dec. 15. At Lifestyles, 2nd floor.

Decor booths
Let the holiday spirit bloom in your home. Check out the booths selling Christmas decors and other holiday items.

New shops to explore!
Two new levels of fashion and home stores have opened just in time for Christmas. Drop by and indulge your shopping urge. It's an entirely new Power Plant experience.

Children's play with a difference
Fairytales come true every afternoon. The original children's interactive play "The Greatest Gift" will run twice a day on Dec. 8 & 9, 15 & 16, and 22 & 23 at 2:30pm and 4:30pm.
Plus! Choirs and other Musical Performances in and around the mall!

The Power Plant

Special promo: free gift wrapping and delivery
Beat the Christmas hassles by having your gifts wrapped and delivered through Mall Runner, Inc. A special promo for shoppers who purchase a minimum amount from participating stores.
Call Mall Runner at 892-4436 or 892-4554 for details.

12 Days of Christmas with Thomas
Hop into a real 40-seater Thomas the Tank Engine on Dec. 1 & 2, 8 & 9, 15 &16, 22 & 23, 29 & 30, 2001 and Jan. 5 & 6, 2002.
A 10-minute ride around the Power Plant Mall is P70 but if you purchase any Thomas item from Page One or Kidz Station, the ride is FREE! Tickets at the South Court.

POWER PLANT MALL
AT ROCKWELL

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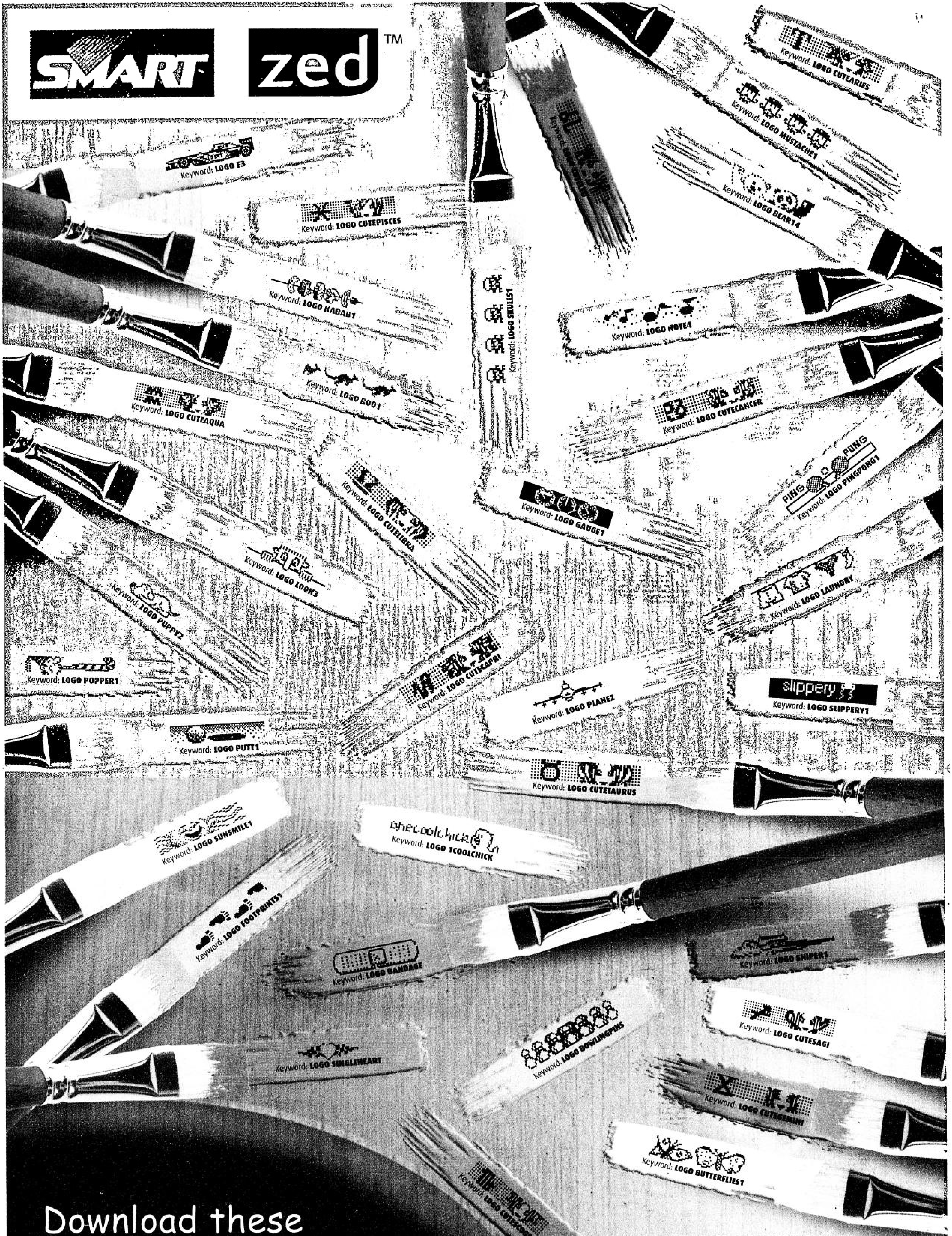
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